

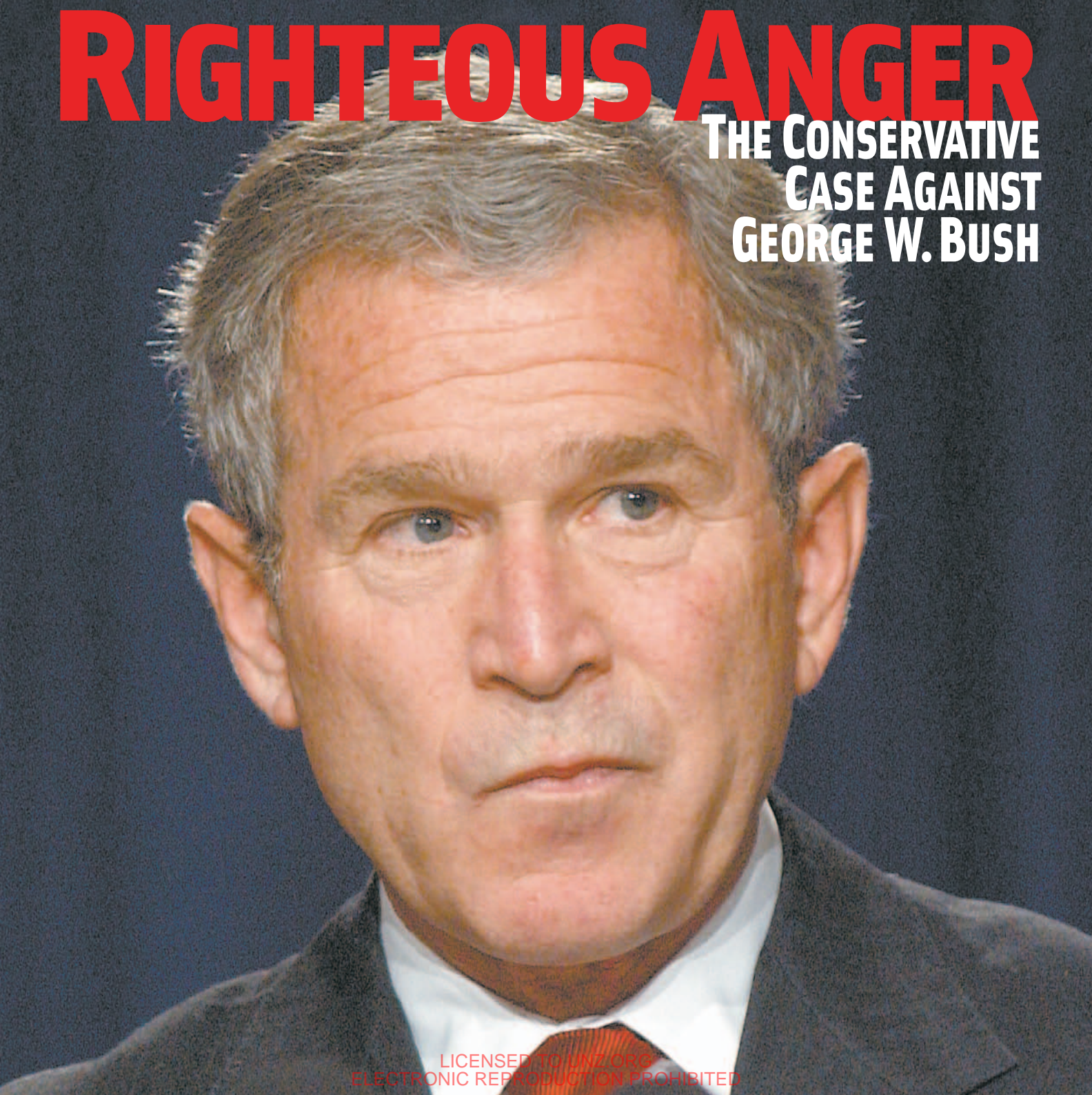
BRIMELOW ON MEXIFORNIA • INSIDE THE PENTAGON

DECEMBER 1, 2003

The American Conservative

RIGHTEOUS ANGER

THE CONSERVATIVE
CASE AGAINST
GEORGE W. BUSH



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NO ALTERNATIVE

Why is it that real conservatives have no credible candidates? I am not a neocon and will not support one. Today's Republican Party is only a little to the right of the Democrats, and both are far, far left of center. Tell your Republican congressman that illegal immigration is wrong, and his solution will most likely be to give the illegals amnesty. Tell him that globalism is bleeding us dry, and he will tell you that it's creating wonderful jobs for Americans. What do we do?

RYAN JOHNSON
Granite Falls, Wash.

GREATER EVIL

Martin Sieff's article (Nov. 3) struck me as another surprising example of wishful thinking on the part of *TAC* writers regarding Howard Dean. Sieff accepts unquestioningly Dean's alleged antiwar views despite the fact that Dean supported every military adventure of the Clinton administration. Indeed, as Dean denounced the Iraq war, he endorsed military intervention in Liberia. If the point is that smaller military adventures are better than large ones, and that Dean therefore is better than Bush, Sieff should say so.

I also disagree that Dean's candidacy will resonate in the South. I have not spoken with any southerners who share my opposition to the Iraq war. And why would pro-gun southerners support a left-wing Democrat who will be surrounded by anti-gun leftists over a president who supports the Second Amendment?

Finally, Sieff's repetition of the Dean delusion first expressed by Scott McConnell demands a response to earlier speculations. The "regularization" policies advocated by Dean are designed to create more Democratic voters, not reduce immigration. That Dean will not support immigration control is evidenced by his labor-union support. He is backed by the public-

employee unions and the Service Employees. These unions benefit from increased immigration. It is the old-line industrial unions supporting Gephardt that lose from immigration.

Conservatives have no real friends in the upcoming presidential race and will have to decide where the lesser of evil lies. I suspect strongly, however, that Governor Dean would exceed our current president in harm done to our nation.

WILLIAM WILDER
via e-mail

NORTHERN EXPOSURE

I typed "American conservatives" into Yahoo just to see what kind of neocon stupidity I would come up with. I was very happy to land on your Web site, where civilized people speak truthfully. As a Canadian, I used to frequent the U.S., but in the last year, I have shied away.

You have no idea how happy sophisticated Canadians were that our government didn't join the "Coalition of the Willing." The less enlightened were outraged at first, that we would let down our neighbor, but that talk calmed down very quickly.

I thought the American populace was too savvy and street smart to be outwitted like this. The question is, are we seeing the twilight of American wealth and influence, or is this just a stage of the learning curve?

DOUGLAS STEWARD
via e-mail

WRETCHED BEASTS

I much enjoyed Steve Sailer's article on metrosexuals (Oct. 20), and while he has a point about the decline of the gentleman, I don't think he understands the meaning of the word "metrosexual." It would be difficult to accuse most metros of being remotely high-brow or of having particularly good taste. If Mr. Sailer is looking for metrosexuals, he would probably have more luck at the hippest night clubs. They are easy to

spot: unhealthily thin, trendily dressed, ridiculously effete. People like that don't go to Springsteen concerts; the guitars might hurt their techno-attuned ears. The metrosexual is merely a rebrand of the "sensitive New Age guy" of the early 90's. He is a cautionary tale, a wretched beast to be pitied but never emulated.

AARON SCHNEIDER
Sydney, Australia

HIP TO THE LINGO

I agree with Taki's call for a return to courteous language (Oct. 20). But he is wrong to blame the decline on "angry blacks" back in the Sixties or at any other time. African-American households have the opposite of a vulgar oral tradition. Angry or not, they are on the front lines of the struggle for clear expression and clean language. This was true 40 years ago, and it remains true today.

So whence our problem? On a teenage trip to ancestral lands, I remember shocked encounters with the depraved vulgarity of the Scottish working class. There were then almost no people of color in Scotland, and doubtless immigrants from Dhaka and Lagos have since raised standards.

Here at home, the worst verbal abuse I see comes by e-mail, notably, a few years back, when my friend Bill Buckley accused me of sedition. Perhaps other liberal writers (and a few wayward conservatives?) have had similar experiences with *National Review*. I am fairly sure that my correspondents were angry but not black. My own guess is that American gangsta-talk originates, in the main, with gangsters. It is duly propagated by gangster-culture. That tradition is mainly white, though imitated by thugs of all kinds.

JAMES K. GALBRAITH
via e-mail

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UPI

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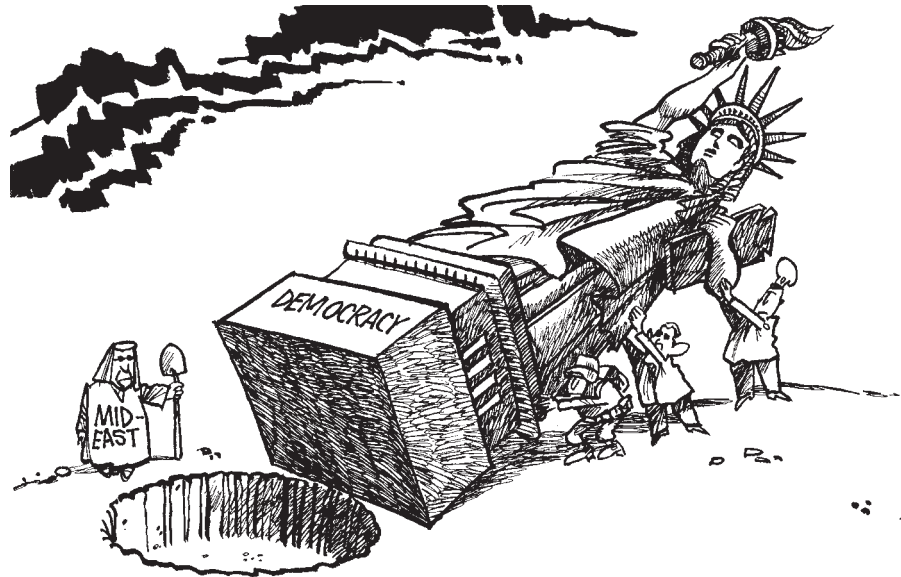
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GENEVA CONVENTION

Despite Ariel Sharon's wishes, Israelis interested in ending their war with the Palestinians are reaching out and finding partners on the other side. It is a hardy staple of Likudnik agitprop (in both Israel and Washington) that no Palestinians are interested in peace with Israel and that when Ehud Barak offered the Palestinians "the moon" in the summer of 2000, Arafat replied with a "terror war." The truth is more complicated and otherwise: Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were tantalizing close to a final agreement before Sharon came to power.

It is thus a welcome sign that talks between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, meeting independently in Geneva in an effort to dot the i's on the two-state solution that was at hand three years ago, have succeeded. An Israeli team headed by Yossi Beilin (justice minister in Israel's last Labor government) and former Palestinian information minister Yasser Rabbo reached a detailed accord on a two-state solution, based roughly on Israel's 1967 borders, with Jerusalem a shared capital. At the same time, Palestinian university president Sari Nusseibeh and former Israeli Security Chief Amy Ayalon have launched a joint Palestinian-Israeli petition drive to support implementation of a two-state solution. Unsurprisingly, Israel's far Right sees such agreements as a threat to their Greater Israel fantasy because they would stymie plans to expand Israeli settlements deeper into Palestinian territory. Sharon has denounced the peace initiatives, and one of his coalition partners depicted the Geneva Accords as "treason" and called for Yossi Beilin's execution.

The informal accords show Palestinians willing to make significant and necessary compromises. Sensible Israelis have long been ready to support a two-



MIKE KEEFE www.cagcartoons.com

state solution. The obstacle is Sharon, the Israeli far Right, and—unfortunately—the Bush administration, which treats Sharon with kid gloves. Secretary of State Colin Powell—who wrote a letter of support for the peace efforts—now seems the lone figure in the Bush administration to understand that Washington's continued financial subsidy of the Israeli occupation is a threat to America's national interests.

[NEOCONS]

GLOBAL REVOLUTION

The administration has auditioned any number of justifications for the conquest of Iraq: links to 9/11, WMD, mass graves. But flagging public support suggests that none has caught hold in the popular mind. Now the White House offers a new rationale, so gauzy that it's as difficult to argue against as it is to implement: "the mission to promote liberty around the world." If we had the means—we don't—it's doubtful that we have the moral authority to export democracy worldwide, but President Bush has that question answered. He told the National Endowment for Democracy

that our brand of liberty is "the plan of Heaven for humanity." Apparently Heaven needs our help.

Amid the president's incantation of freedom's lofty verse came a revolutionary note familiar to those who know the landscape of other utopias. The promise of global revolution has filled graves from Petrograd to Peking, but this administration claims immunity from the Trotskyite pedigree because their aim is democracy. Imposed by force.

"We've reached another great turning point—and the resolve we show will shape the next stage of the world democratic movement," President Bush said, promising that our Mideast overhaul will continue for "decades to come." Question, comrade: is there also a Five Year Plan?

[POLITICS]

DIXIE PICK-UP

The imbroglio over Howard Dean's flirtation with the Confederate flag—or at least his proclaimed readiness to pursue voters who stick it on their pickup trucks—says something interesting about him and devastating about the

Democratic presidential field. Dean's rivals treated the remark as a first-degree gaffe, a transgression of campus speech codes and forced diversity worship, and mounted a pile-on that showed the limits of Democratic tolerance. John Edwards hilariously called Dean's remark an insult to Southerners who drive trucks. The sight of Kerry and Sharpton demanding an apology from the Vermonter brought to mind an image of grown men jumping out of their seats to seek refuge from a mouse on the floor. "Confederate flag, eek!!!" With national leaders like this, who can doubt why the Democratic Party is on life support in the South?

About Dean himself, the remark projects a political realism absent from most of the Democratic field: the election won't be competitive if the Democrats rely on a "rainbow coalition" of blacks, browns, and "progressive" whites, as Jesse Jackson once imagined. The Dems need culturally conservative white voters as well—and perhaps especially white men who might be persuaded that policies of imperial war and sending factory jobs to Malaysia are not in their best interest. Why shouldn't such folk stick the battle flag on their rear windows?

By stepping off the reservation of liberal pieties about the flag, Dean projected himself as ready to take risks, throw some long passes, run some reverses, and generally gave notice that he won't be re-running the Michael Dukakis campaign. If he follows through, for instance by embracing the populist side of the immigration-reform issue (as yet no sign of this), he could turn next year's race into a tight and pivotal contest.

[TRADE]

TRACK-SHOPS

"Facts are stubborn things," John Adams famously wrote. But then he didn't work for the editorial page of the

Wall Street Journal. In a transparent bid to vindicate its faith in the infallibility of free trade, the *Journal* penned a lead editorial "In Defense of P. Diddy." Seems the rap mogul found himself in a PR bind when news broke that his swanky Sean John clothing line runs through Honduran sweatshops. Not so, says the *Journal*. The label may be stitched in Honduras, but spare no sympathy for workers averaging 43¢ an hour. Their factory has air conditioning. Ergo, not a sweatshop. Ergo, an American entrepreneur outfitting the home team in high-end sweatsuits—ahem, tracksuits—can continue to shop the world for cheap workers without worrying about labor standards or unemployed Americans.

[ECONOMICS]

BOOM OR BUBBLE?

Real economic growth was a superb 7.2 percent in the third quarter. The Bush administration rightly credits much of this to its tax cuts, one of the administration's few conservative achievements.

Two things stand out. First, as expected, the one-time tax rebate, more than growth in wage income, drove the \$200 billion increase in personal consumption. As all of the money used to pay for the tax cut was borrowed from foreign sources, future increases in consumption will be constrained as we pay that money back.

Second, and less expected, service-sector productivity soared. Increases in service-sector productivity mean the service sector doesn't need more people to produce more wealth. When considered alongside the decline in American manufacturing jobs and the new trend of outsourcing service jobs, this means that the economy is growing fast without adding many jobs.

Such "jobless growth" represents a stunning vindication for economics writer Peter Brimelow. He has empha-

sized that simply increasing the labor pool through mass immigration no longer produces real wealth. What does is technology: primarily technological advances and, secondarily, the capital to deploy them. That's what happened in the second quarter; there was therefore no need for the immigration of the 300,000 foreigners the government allowed into the country in the last three months.

—Robertson Morrow

[IMMIGRATION]

NO AMERICANS NEED APPLY

Hoping perhaps to remind us of their days of Untouchable glory, the feds raided Wal-Marts in 21 states recently, looking this time not for bathtub gin or Canadian whisky, but rather for illegal-immigrant laborers. The Oct. 23 operation netted 245 store cleaners (most Mexican, many Eastern European)—indeed an impressive display of governmental competence in the service of an oft-neglected duty. Even so, a certain residual skepticism remains in order.

As for the arrested aliens, the AP reports, "If they had no previous criminal record, they were released with notices to appear before immigration judges." How many of these good non-citizens—whose first act on American soil was to break American law—will show up for court is anyone's guess, but it's rather more likely that they'll soon be back to work, if not for the world's largest retailer then for another upstanding member of the cheap-labor lobby.

The federal government's future actions are harder to predict. Were the raids just an elaborate spectacle to show an electorate tired of porous borders, flouted laws, and lost jobs that their representatives at last were "doing something"? Or will Washington get serious, pushing for sanctions against Wal-Mart and deporting those detained?

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Then there is the disconcerting possibility that the big sting was just a high-profile prelude to a federal guest-worker program. Three such stealth amnesties are now before Congress; Governor Schwarzenegger approves; even *nouveau* immigration-reformer Victor Davis Hanson is on board. And after a decent interval of post-9/11 discretion, Mexican President Vicente Fox is once again lobbying his friend George W. Bush for the amnesty they both desire. Recall: not long after Eliot Ness nabbed Al Capone, Prohibition was repealed.

[SOVEREIGNTY]

REAGAN WAS RIGHT

Team Bush is so confident that conservatives are a lock that they're past even pretending to court the Republican base. Just the opposite. Last month, in a move that should send social conservatives shopping for an alternative candidate, President Bush re-enrolled the U.S. in UNESCO. Nineteen years after Ronald Reagan withdrew, citing rampant waste and anti-American views, not only is the price of admission up to \$60 million annually, membership makes us party to initiatives no true conservative could ever endorse.

The organization has published a teachers' guide that rails against the "poisoned air of nationalism" and claims "one of the chief aims of education today should be to prepare boys and girls to take an active part in the creation of a world society." It lobbies for "criminal penalties" for speech deemed to be a "vilification" of homosexuality. Without congressional consultation, it appropriated 70 million acres of American territory as international biosphere. And far from being simply pro-choice, UNESCO is so zealous to promote abortion that it supports financial redress for women who are "denied access to the [abortion] services that should be made available to them."

Courtesy of a political move calculated to salve wounds at the UN, we're now associated with these policies. But expect no outcry from conservative quarters, for the Bush campaign's calculation is correct. Rather than pressuring the president they elected, Republicans are defending him. Witness a recent *National Review*, "When in 1984 President Reagan pulled the U.S. out of UNESCO, we doffed our hats. ... President Bush has returned us to the fold. ... We are glad that things seem to have changed at UNESCO ..." Problem is, little has changed at UNESCO—but apparently much has changed at the White House.

[CULTURE]

WHERE YOUR CHILDREN ARE

Once upon a simpler time, kids climbed trees and rode bikes and played ball. Now the typical tyke logs onto his personal computer to catch the episode of Barney he missed while playing video games. According to a new study by the Kaiser Foundation, 68 percent of children under two spend an average of two hours and five minutes in front of a screen each day. A quarter of those tots have TVs in their bedrooms.

Adding a few years seems more to increase technical dexterity than to diminish the zombie impulse. The Kaiser study found that 70 percent of four to six year olds have used a computer, 64 percent can operate a mouse with ease, and 40 percent can load a CD by themselves.

Madison Avenue has caught on—97 percent of kids own products based on TV or movie characters—but parents seem slow to notice that their children's best friends shouldn't be named Sponge Bob and Pokemon. Or perhaps they have noticed and find AOL an inexpensive *au pair* and Nemo a handy tranquilizer. ■

Why Do They Hate Dixie?

“Howard Dean wants the white trash vote,” wrote *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer in mockery of the Vermonter. “[T]hat’s clearly what [Dean]

meant when he said he wanted the votes of ‘guys with Confederate flags in their pickup trucks.’”

After Dean was savaged by Al Sharpton, who called the Confederate flag an “American swastika,” Krauthammer was rhapsodic. His humiliation serves Dean right, Krauthammer chortled. He should never have pandered to Southern “yahoos” and “rebel-yelling racist red-neck[s].”

What is it in the wiring of these neocons that they so loathe the white Southerners who cherish the monuments, men, and memories of the Lost Cause?

Last December, Krauthammer, David Frum, and Jonah Goldberg squabbled noisily over who was first to join the media mob that lynched Trent Lott for his tribute to Senator Thurmond on Strom’s 100th birthday. When Lott lost his leadership post, these neocons reveled.

Why the Hollywood Left hates Dixie is easy to understand. It is conservative, Christian, traditionalist, hostile to the cultural revolution. But why do the neocons? After all, the folks Krauthammer calls “white trash,” are the most reliable conservative voters in America, God-and-country people. They enlist in disproportionate numbers in the military and die in disproportionate numbers in America’s wars.

The neocons are pro-Israel. So, too, are these folks who believe in standing by Israel because the Bible tells them so. Yet, when it comes to Southerners who revere the Confederate flag, neocons like Krauthammer echo that *Washing-*

ton Post writer who dismissed white Southern Christians as “poor, uneducated and easy to command.”

Yet, even the *Post* did not use the venom Krauthammer employed. Indeed, I never heard George Wallace or Lester Maddox, whom I came to know late in their lives, use the kind of language on political foes that Krauthammer uses on people he doesn’t even know.

A point of personal privilege: I have family roots in the South, in Mississippi. When the Civil War came, Cyrus Baldwin enlisted and did not survive Vicksburg. William Buchanan of Okolona, who would marry Baldwin’s daughter, fought at Atlanta and was captured by General Sherman. William Baldwin Buchanan was the name given to my father and by him to my late brother.

As a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, I have been to their gatherings. I spoke at the 2001 SCV convention in Lafayette, La. The Military Order of the Stars and Bars presented me with a battle flag and a wooden canteen like the ones my ancestors carried.

Has Krauthammer been to one of these meetings? Has he any knowledge of these people he calls “white trash”?

Discussing the Dean-flag issue, one *New York Times* columnist wrote of the campaign “to remove the Stars and Bars from the top of the South Carolina Statehouse.” But it was not the Stars and Bars, first flag of the Confederate States of America, that flew over that statehouse. It was the battle flag of the Confederate army, with St. Andrew’s Cross

on it, on which, tradition holds, the apostle Andrew was crucified.

And that flag atop the statehouse flew beneath Old Glory. What were South Carolinians saying by putting it there? Only this: “We are proud of the bravery of our grandfathers who fought under this blood-stained banner, but we are Americans and the Stars and Stripes represents our country now and forever.”

What is wrong with that?

To Krauthammer the battle flag is a racist symbol. And, yes, it has been used by racists to insult and intimidate. But so, too, has the Christian cross when it was burned on hillsides. And so, too, has the American flag.

These symbols are abused because they have power. But to Southern kids who put battle-flag decals on book bags, and their fathers who put replicas on cars and trucks, it does not mean they hate anyone. It means: “We love our Southern heritage and we shall never forget our ancestors who fought and died under this flag.”

Late in life, Joshua Chamberlain, the Union hero who won the Medal of Honor for holding Little Round Top when Lee sent the Texans to turn Meade’s flank on the second day at Gettysburg, said that whenever he saw that flag, it recalled to him the indomitable courage of the men who had fought under it. At re-enactments of Civil War battles, high-school football games, and NASCAR races, that flag is ubiquitous across the South.

If Krauthammer and the neocons really believe the only folks who cherish this symbol are “white trash” and “yahoos,” that tells us more about them than it does about the South, of which they know nothing. ■

Righteous Anger

The Conservative Case Against George W. Bush

By Doug Bandow

SOME LIBERALS ADMIT that they hate President George W. Bush. Many conservatives say they are appalled at this phenomenon. Indeed, some of them believe any criticism of the president to be akin to treason. So much for the political tone in Washington.

American politics have never been for the faint-hearted. Even George Washington suffered some public abuse, and presidential campaigns involving revolutionary luminaries John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were vitriolic. After the Civil War, Republican candidates routinely waved the "bloody shirt"; one GOP stalwart denounced the Democrats as the party of "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion."

The GOP did not treat Harry Truman with kid gloves, and Democrats never let fairness impede their attacks on Barry Goldwater in 1964. Richard Nixon was widely reviled on the Left. Some fringe partisans expressed sorrow that John Hinckley failed in his assassination attempt against Ronald Reagan. And then there was Bill Clinton. Some Republicans saw him as a drug-dealing murderer whose wife killed family friend Vincent Foster.

Now Jonathan Chait of the *New Republic* says simply, "I hate President George W. Bush." Not one to hold back, he explains, "You decide Bush is a dullard lacking any moral constraints in his pursuit of partisan gain, loyal to no principle save the comfort of the very rich, unburdened by any thoughtful consideration of the national interest, and a man who, on those occasions when he actually does make a correct decision, does so almost by accident." More concisely, charges James Traub in the *New York Times Magazine*, "George Bush is a craven, lazy, hypocritical nitwit."

Chait's recent essay has triggered a spate of conservative responses. Bush is wonderful, liberals are irrational, and the whole thing is bad for America. These are rather hilarious arguments coming from conservatives. For instance, *New York Times* columnist David Brooks calls the phenomenon of the Bush haters a "core threat to democracy." Yet, as Brooks acknowledges, the Clinton years were also well populated with haters. Brooks now regrets having not spoken out more clearly against the latter.

Better late than never, perhaps, but his conversion looks awfully convenient, as does that of other conservative Bush defenders. Hatred of Bill Clinton never made sense. In contrast, anger was fully justified.

I never understood why conservatives invested so much emotion in Clinton. He was a charming and bright but enormously flawed, highly ambitious man of few principles. That warranted criticism, not hatred. But I joined in early and often. During his first summer of discontent I urged Clinton's critics to "pile on" as opposition mounted to his policies. Over the years there was a moral imperative to take aim in the target-rich environment: the attempted government takeover of the health-care system, the pork-barrel stimulus package, the use of jackboot tactics against critics of federal policies, the endless claims of victimization, the unjustified Kosovo war, the sale of administration access for campaign contributions, the special-interest Whitewater and cattle-futures pay-offs, the sustained efforts to cover up such abuses, and the presidential perjury in federal court proceedings.

Clinton was properly impeached. He should have been removed from office. The rule of law demanded no less.

Similarly, though George W. Bush is very different from Bill Clinton, hatred makes no sense. But anger is appropriate.

Much of the liberal case against President Bush is barely short of silly. His election was not illegitimate. Whether or not the candidate with the most votes should win, that's not what the U.S. Constitution says. Blame the Founders, not George W. Bush.

Complaints about Bush's fabled inarticulateness and privileged background are superficial. More worrisome are his partisan focus, demand for personal loyalty, and tendency to keep score, but these are hardly characteristics warranting hatred.

The charge that he's a crazy right-winger is beyond silly. Other than tax cuts—which have benefited the rich only because the rich paid, and still pay, most of the taxes—virtually nothing of conservative substance has happened. Government is more expansive and expensive than ever before.

Jonathan Chait must have been smoking funny cigarettes when he wrote, “[I]t's not much of an exaggeration to say that Bush would like to roll back the federal government to something resembling its pre-New Deal state.” Sad to say, inaugurating limited private retirement accounts is not the same as eliminating Social Security, let alone dismantling the Leviathan that has grown up in Washington.

James Traub contends, “Today's Republican Party is arguably the most extreme—the furthest from the center—of any governing majority in the nation's history.” This is the Republican Party that has embraced as its own every liberal initiative, from Lyndon Johnson's Medicare to Jimmy Carter's Department of Education to Bill Clinton's Ameri-

Corps. This is the Republican Party preparing to enact a Medicare drug benefit that would represent the largest expansion of the welfare state in 40 years. This is the Republican Party that is increasing federal education spending as if doing so had something to do with the quality of local schools. This is the Republican Party that is increasing spending faster than during the Clinton years. Right-wing extremists? For the Left, liberal means centrist, and moderate conservative approaches fascist. Really conservative is off the spectrum.

But this president deserves to be criticized. Sharply. By anyone who believes in limited, constitutional government.

First, George W. Bush, despite laudable personal and family characteristics, is remarkably incurious and ill read. Gut instincts can carry even a gifted politician only so far. And a lack of knowledge leaves him vulnerable to simplistic remedies to complex problems, especially when it comes to turning America into the globe's governess.

Second, despite occasional exceptions, the Bush administration, backed by the Republican-controlled Congress, has been promoting larger government

The president and his aides have given imperiousness new meaning. Officials are apparently incapable of acknowledging that their pre-war assertions about Iraq's WMD capabilities were incorrect; indeed, they resent that the president is being questioned about his administration's claims before the war. They are unwilling to accept a role for Congress in deciding how much aid money to spend.

Some of Bush's supporters have been even worse, charging critics with a lack of patriotism. Not to genuflect at the president's every decision is treason. In two decades of criticizing liberal politicians and positions, I have rarely endured the vitriol that was routinely spewed by conservatives when I argued against war with Iraq over the last year. Conservative papers stopped running my column; conservative Web sites removed it from their archives. That was their right, of course, but they demonstrated that it was not just the Clintons who were fair-weather friends.

Third, President George W. Bush has made Woodrow Wilson the guiding spirit of Republican foreign policy. A candidate who criticized nation building is now pursuing global social engineering. The rep-

**VIRTUALLY NOTHING OF CONSERVATIVE SUBSTANCE HAS HAPPENED.
GOVERNMENT IS MORE EXPANSIVE AND EXPENSIVE.**

at almost every turn. Its spending policies have been irresponsible, and its trade strategies have been destructive. The president has been quite willing to sell out the national interest for perceived political gain, whether the votes sought are from seniors or farmers. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 encouraged the administration to push into law civil-liberties restrictions that should worry anyone, whether they are wielded by a Bush or a Clinton administration.

representative of a party that once criticized foreign aid is now pushing lavish U.S. social spending abroad, demanding that it be a gift rather than a loan.

And the administration has advanced a doctrine of pre-emption that encourages war for allegedly humanitarian ends. Attempting to justify the Iraqi war retrospectively by pointing to Saddam Hussein's manifold crimes, the president apparently believes he may attack any nation to advance human rights.

Ironically, the Bush administration has adopted as its policy the question posed by then UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright to then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell: what's the use of having this fine military you keep talking about if we don't use it?

The negative practical consequences of this policy are all too evident. Ugly foreign governments from Iran to North Korea have an incentive to arm themselves, quickly, with WMD to deter a U.S. preventive assault.

Iraq has become a magnet for terrorist attacks while becoming a long-term dependent under U.S. military occupation.

Anger towards—indeed, hatred of—Washington is likely to continue growing, even in once friendly nations. It will be difficult to maintain an imperial foreign policy with a volunteer military.

Liberals should identify with the Bush record. He is increasing the size and power of the U.S. government both at home and abroad. He has expanded social engineering from the American nation to the entire globe. He is lavish with dollars on both domestic and foreign programs. For this the Left hates him?

The tendency to hate, really hate, opposing politicians surely is not good for American democracy. It is not rational to hate George W. Bush, just as it was not rational to hate Bill Clinton. But after spending eight years hating Clinton, conservatives who complain about the Bush-haters appear to be hypocrites.

George W. Bush enjoys neither royal nor religious status that would place him beyond criticism. Whether or not he is a real conservative, he is no friend of limited, constitutional government. And for that the American people should be very, very angry. ■

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Been There, Bombed That

An American revisits the Indochina we “lost.”

By Fred Reed

VIENTIANE, LAOS—The Mekong flows brown and ugly past the beer stalls and restaurants across the street from the Lane Xian hotel, a slightly decomposing pile, but comfortable enough. The country is green, perhaps not hopelessly backward but nearly so, and rattles with motor scooters. The people are small and brown. When female, they are often quite pretty. Westerners are common: a sizable current of backpacking tourists comes through, often *en route* to Luang Prabang. Laos is the sort of place writers invariably call “sleepy,” so I won’t.

It is a backwater, and was during the years of the war in Vietnam. Today it contains preserved traces of those receding times, like fossilized tracks of forgotten dinosaurs.

I met a reasonably English-speaking young Lao woman in a stall on the river and recruited her as tour guide. I liked her. She was studying to the extent she could in a business school in hopes of getting into hotel work. Waitressing in a Lao beer chute is a dead end. Our deal was that I’d pay for the cab on forays into the countryside, correct her English, and buy lunch. She would be a factotum.

During a temple crawl she mentioned in passing that life had been difficult for her family after they had lost her father. How had that happened, I asked unwisely. He died fighting the Americans, she said. Oh.

Maybe it is better not to go back to where your wars were. Perspective is corrosive of causes unless they are very good ones. I’m not sure ours were.

Three decades have passed since we were bombing the Laos. It is hard to remember why they were a threat to the United States. The Lao communists won, at least in the sense that they kept the country, and nothing bad happened to the United States. The communists won decisively in Vietnam, and nothing bad happened to the United States. They won in Cambodia, and nothing bad happened to the United States.

The shifting alliances are baffling to my non-actuarial mind. The hated Japanese and Germans are our friends, the hated Russians help us build the space station and talk of joining NATO, and the recently evil Chinese have most-favored-nation status and make everything we own. We have conquered Afghanistan, which we once helped defend against conquest by Russians, and we are on good terms with the British, who burned the Capitol in the War of 1812. (If encouraged, do you suppose they might do it again?)

I, my guide, and two taxi drivers were looking at another temple, which Laos has lots of, when I asked about the French. They were gone, said one of the drivers with approval. After them came the Americans, he said, who were also gone, and then the Russians, who too were gone. They clearly thought that gone was the proper condition for all of these groups.

I don’t think that Americans quite grasp that countries don’t like having foreigners bomb them. We tend to justify our wars in terms of abstractions: we are attacking to defeat communism, impose democracy, overcome evil or,

now, to end terrorism. The countries being bombed, devastated, and occupied usually think they are fighting invaders who have no business being there. The distinction is lost on many. I know aging veterans who to this day do not understand why the Vietnamese weren't grateful that we had come to help them fight communists.

Southeast Asia is full of the moldering offal of deceased foreign policy. In Siem Reap in Cambodia a couple of weeks ago I was delighted to find a thriving tourist economy based on the ruins of Angkor. The schools were full. Hotels went up. The countryside is poor yet well fed, and people have every expectation of waking up alive the next day. Yet you still see one-legged men. For years, Cambodia's chief crop was land mines. The killing fields were real.

I lost acquaintances to the Khmer Rouge after the fall of Phnom Penh and tend to be disagreeable when I think about it. Perhaps I should reflect stoically on the necessity of breaking eggs to make omelets. The wisdom of this is more apparent to those who are not eggs.

In Cambodia, the United States, exercising its God-given right to meddle catastrophically anywhere it can reach, had destabilized a puzzled country of thatched huts and water buffalo and facilitated the arrival of Pol Pot. The Americans then went back to California to surf.

The communists, exercising the mindless brutality common among them, had then killed huge if uncertain numbers of people for no reason and wrecked the country. This showed that the Russians and Americans could co-operate when they wished. Call it non-peaceful co-extermination. Or call it synergy or convergence or conservation of parity. The Khmers died.

On the train from Bangkok to the Thai-Lao border at Nong Khai I had shared a compartment with a Lao, per-

haps in his sixties, from a comparatively rich family. He had spent 30 years in business in Paris. We became casual friends, and he invited me to dinner at his house, where some 50 of his relatives were having a Buddhist commemoration of something or other. Members of the family had returned for the event from several countries.

THE SCHOOLS WERE FULL. HOTELS WENT UP. THE COUNTRYSIDE IS **POOR YET WELL FED**, AND PEOPLE HAVE EVERY **EXPECTATION OF WAKING UP ALIVE** THE NEXT DAY.

They were hospitable and spoke I have no idea how many languages among them. The children were well mannered, the food excellent and accompanied by that traditional Lao drink, Pepsi. I supposed that they were the enemy, or had been, but wasn't sure why. I sometimes think the State Department needs to get out more and the CIA, less. The notion of devout Buddhist atheistic communist businessmen scoured around my mental craw, but I could never get a handle on it.

While eating breakfast at the Lane Xian, I was surprised to hear Spanish. The two fellows at the next table were Cubans, doubtless in Vientiane because of party solidarity or something equally as tiresome. I chatted with them briefly about nothing in particular. They were friendly, having the notion that the American government hated Cuba but that the American public did not. To a considerable extent this is true. The analysis is complicated by the inability of many to distinguish between Cuba and Castro.

I don't understand our embargo of Cuba. When the Russian empire was trying to turn the island into a military base aimed at the United States, the embargo made sense. Now it doesn't. As near as I can tell, it continues because

of the petrified vindictiveness of Cold Warriors without a Cold War. It's funny: we don't like Castro because he oppresses his people, so we maintain a pointless embargo that also oppresses them. More co-operation.

If you get to Laos, the reclining Buddha a half hour from Vientiane is worth the trip. The little countries of the

region were not always backwaters, or not so backwaterish anyway. In brief respites from killing each other, which they did as relentlessly as everyone else, they made some remarkable things. If you are in the business of building hotels, you might put one hereabouts. The country could use the money. I can recommend a young lady to help you manage it. ■

Fred Reed's writing has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Harper's, and National Review, among other places.

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California's Burning Again

The Golden State has known fires before. The latest won't be the last.

By Roger D. McGrath

THOUSAND OAKS, CALIF.—I could smell it upon awakening. It usually began that way—merely an offshore flow that changed the air in my coastal community from moist and marine-scented to dry and flavored with the aromas of the Great Basin. This always excited me because it meant that waves would not be crumpling from onshore winds by midmorning but would retain their shape throughout the day. By afternoon the flow had usually become a wind. Called a Santa Ana by everyone in Southern California since the late 19th century, the wind burst through the passes of the San Gabriel Mountains and swept across the Los Angeles basin and out to sea. It brought temperatures in the 100s, and its offshore direction could turn ordinary waves into surfers' dreams. It usually arrived in September and would reappear intermittently until the end of November or December. We kids who surfed were stoked.

If the wind blew too hard, though, not only did it undo the good it had done in shaping waves, but it also fanned the smallest fires into holocausts. Raging brush fires are nothing new to California. The Indians had taken advantage of Santa Ana winds to ignite tinder-dry brush during the fall and send panic-stricken animals fleeing down canyons to the sea. Waiting at the mouth of the canyons were Indian hunters who dispatched the fire-driven

deer and other game with ease. The Indians seem to have engaged in the practice for centuries before Spanish explorers first reported it during the 18th century. The fires had another benefit for the Indians: hillsides and canyons were cleared of dense undergrowth, nutritious grasses and plants sprang up with the first rains, and deer browsed to their heart's content, growing sleek and strong.

Although the Indians were simply intent on driving game out of the hills, they were practicing a kind of fire ecology. Repeated burns prevented a buildup of fuel, and the fires were usually not able to burn with the heat and intensity necessary to kill trees. The bark of healthy trees is amazingly resilient and is able to protect the trees from long-term damage. This is especially true of the several varieties of oaks that dot California's coastal mountains and valleys. The Spanish *ranchero* continued the practice of burning, although he did it to improve grazing for his longhorn cattle. As long as man-made structures were not consumed, the practice seemed to have nothing but beneficial effects.

It was on a *ranch* that one of California's first great rural homes was consumed by a Santa-Ana-driven brush fire. Frederick Rindge was the scion of a wealthy New England family who bought Rancho Topanga, Malibu, Sequit

—the area known simply as Malibu today—from the Kellers in 1893. Friction immediately developed between the backcountry homesteaders, living just beyond the ranch's boundaries, and Rindge. The previous owner, Matthew Keller, an open-handed Irish immigrant who had once studied for the priesthood, had built a road through the property—the basis for Malibu's portion of the coast highway today—and allowed local homesteaders to use it. Rindge erected locked gates and hired armed patrols to guard access. At the time he lived in a home in Santa Monica and visited the ranch only occasionally. Then, in 1903, he built a grand ranch house near the mouth of Malibu canyon. Before he and his wife, May, could fully settle in, a Santa Ana began to blow, and a fire erupted high in the canyon. It took only hours for the fire to race to the sea and consume everything in its path, including the Rindge ranch house. Arson was suspected, and suspicion rested upon the backcountry homesteaders. Rindge moved back to Santa Monica and died not much more than a year later.

Ever since the loss of Rindge's house, Malibu has seen, again and again, the destruction of homes in Santa-Ana-driven brush fires. The first great blaze that I remember erupted on a night just after Christmas in December 1956. Starting near Lake Sherwood in Thousand

Oaks and driven by Santa Ana winds gusting to 50 MPH, it roared through the Santa Monica Mountains and reached the ocean at Zuma Beach in Malibu. It scorched more than 35,000 acres and razed more than a hundred homes in an area that was then only very thinly populated.

In the path of the fire, in an area known as Malibu Park, lay the little red ranch house of my wife's grandparents. Next door was the property where my wife's parents would soon build a house and where my wife and her five brothers and sisters would be reared. Houses were scattered through Malibu Park on large parcels of land that included nearly as many horses as people. Into this bucolic setting came a wall of flame that lit the sky in the middle of the night. Waking up, 4-year-old Gaynor McGregor ran into her parents' room and exclaimed, "Look Mommy, the sun is shining bright!" Nearby the McGoverns were jolted from slumber when the glass panes in their windows began to explode from the heat. From a house down the road a man bolted naked out the front door and raced just ahead of the flames for the ocean. To his rescue came a neighbor with a blanket and a car. Another Malibu Park resident, driving to his house to retrieve valuables, became disoriented in thick smoke and swerved into a gully. Before he could extricate himself the fire swept down the gully and left him incinerated.

Most people—and horses and dogs—reached the beach safely and watched helplessly as houses, barns, corrals, and sheds went up in flames. Both the McGregors and the McGoverns lost their homes but would be among the first to rebuild. The little red ranch house still stands on two acres of land overlooking Zuma Beach, although owned by a new family and worth a hundred times its value in 1956.

Those who lost their houses got some small comfort when President Eisenhower declared Malibu a federal disaster area, providing tax relief and low-interest loans for the victims of the fire. A disaster area it was. I saw it firsthand. Not only did I live in the adjacent community of Pacific Palisades, but I also delivered the Sunday *Los Angeles Times* to Malibu and was allowed access to all the burned areas. Actually, since I was just a kid, it was my paper boss, Royal, who was allowed access. I delivered an afternoon newspaper, the *Mirror News*, Monday through Saturday on my bicycle and then the *Times* on Sunday with Royal. He would drive while I stood up through the sunroof of his VW bug and hurled the papers. Between 2:00 and 6:00 in the morning we covered most of what is today the city of Malibu. Since the area had only a fraction of the houses that are there today, the fire reduced the number of our customers sharply. From Latigo Canyon westward to the county line, especially in the Malibu Park area, houseless chimneys stood everywhere.

A MAN BOLTED NAKED OUT THE FRONT DOOR AND RACED JUST AHEAD OF THE FLAMES FOR THE OCEAN.

The next great conflagration came in 1961. Early on the morning of Nov. 6, as a Santa Ana wind whipped to 30, then 40, and eventually 50 MPH, a blaze ignited in the brush-covered Santa Monica Mountains near Mulholland Drive just east of the San Diego freeway. Hundreds of homes had been erected in the area, a less expensive and less exclusive portion of Bel Air, during the preceding decade, and now they burned like matchboxes. The fire jumped the freeway to the west and scorched portions of Kenter, Mandeville, and Sullivan

canyons. Homes by the dozen fell to the flames. The athletic fields of Paul Revere Junior High School, which I had attended, were crowded with horses, taken there from houses in Mandeville and Sullivan. One of those to rescue horses was Melany May, an accomplished rider, a good friend, and one of my classmates from the seventh through the 12th grades. Her father was Cliff May, prominent designer and builder of the "California ranch home." Now, many of those ranch homes were in flames.

Ronald Reagan was living at that time on Alta Mura Drive in the Riviera section of the Palisades. His house was only a stone's throw from Sullivan Canyon. His 10-year-old daughter, Patti, attended the John Thomas Dye School in Bel Air. The school was evacuated almost as soon as she arrived on the morning of the sixth. Two hours after her departure, it went up in flames. Meanwhile, the Reagans took in the wife and family of a friend from Mandeville, while he remained behind to soak the roof of his house with a garden hose. "Both he and the house survived," recalls Patti, "but I know from

the lowered voices in the living room that no one was sure he would. Our cars were packed in case we had to evacuate; from our Pacific Palisades home, we could look at the hills in back and see an ominous orange glow."

Later in the day, a second fire erupted in Topanga Canyon, which in those days was home to a small number of well-kept ranches and solidly constructed homes and a large collection of poorly constructed—although some tidy and picturesque—houses clinging to hill-sides and creek banks. Few of the latter

had been constructed by licensed contractors, and most were erected without thought to building codes. Some were nothing more than shanties, built with old lumber and tarpaper. It's no wonder that in the '40s and '50s some people referred to Topanga Canyon as Appalachia West. With the fire threatening, down from their canyon dwellings came an odd assortment of hillbillies, with dogs, horses, and goats in tow, eccentrics of all types, and struggling musicians and artists, including my sister and her husband, and their year-old son. No sooner had my sister reached our home on the rim of Temescal Canyon in the Palisades than the fire jumped the ridge and began heading our way. It burned the hills above the Palisades but stopped there when the wind died. The two fires scorched some 10,000 acres, destroyed nearly 500 houses, and caused property damage in excess of \$25 million: big bucks in those days.

Small fires erupted intermittently in the Santa Monica Mountains through rest of the sixties, but the next big burn occurred late in September 1970 when a

thanking them for saving the house. Then, with a slight smile, he said that he had one minor complaint—they should have let the house burn and instead saved the barn because the latter contained all the things he considered most valuable. That truly was Reagan. In the early 1960s, I often saw him on the ranch, disking a field with a tractor, mending a fence, or chopping wood.

None of these fires slowed growth. Houses continued to be built deeper into the canyons and higher on the ridges of the Santa Monica Mountains. As a consequence, each succeeding fire consumed more homes and cost more millions. Although nature conspires to provide the necessary elements for the blazes—thick brush, months without rain, and Santa Ana winds—they are usually started by man, often with arsonist intent. Such was the case with the great Malibu fire of October 1978. With a Santa Ana blowing hard, a firebug torched a brushy hillside in Agoura, which lies on the northern slopes of the Santa Monica Mountains. Within hours the fire was roaring and leaping from hillside to hillside and headed for Zuma

way around a burning barn and a flaming hillside to the beach. While firemen sat on their trucks on the coast highway, evidently waiting for orders, she made her way back to her parents' house. There she found a brother-in-law busy wetting the roof with a hose. She took similar action at a neighbor's house. Through the smoke, Susan and her brother-in-law could occasionally catch glimpses of one another, from rooftop to rooftop, hose in hand. The next morning both houses were still standing, while others in the area had been reduced to cinders.

In the meantime, the Mandeville fire had reached the Palisades and was roaring down Temescal Canyon. Those houses along the canyon's rim above Sunset Boulevard were especially vulnerable. One of those houses was the home of "Gramsey" Ford, the grandmother of my childhood buddy Scott McKenzie and the wife of Los Angeles county supervisor and Republican Representative Leland Ford. The house looked like a smaller version of Tara from *Gone With the Wind*. Inside the two-story structure were memorabilia and papers from the congressman's days in office. Its backyard dropped off into Temescal Canyon and, over the years, we kids had built several trails from the yard down the steep slope through thick brush and oak trees to the creek bottom below. I knew all too well that there was fuel aplenty to feed the approaching fire and raced to the house. I found Scott's younger brother, Brett, and together we decided to stay for the duration. With garden hoses in hand we climbed onto the second-story roof and began hosing down the shingles. Most people in the neighborhood had already gathered up their valuables and fled south of Sunset. The boulevard became a kind of battlefront with fire trucks lined up for blocks. Apparently, the fire department had made the decision that hillside homes to the north of Sunset were toast.

LOCAL FIREMEN FONDLY **REMEMBER REAGAN** COMING TO THEIR STATION AND PERSONALLY **THANKING THEM** FOR SAVING HIS HOUSE.

powerful Santa Ana drove flames through portions of Malibu to the sea. Burned by this and earlier fires was Ronald Reagan's ranch in the upper portion of Malibu Canyon. (His Rancho del Cielo, high on a ridgeline above Refugio Canyon near Santa Barbara, would come years later.) Quick work by firemen, including setting a backfire, saved Reagan's ranch house, although his barn was burned. Local firemen fondly remember Reagan coming to their station on Cornell Road and personally

Beach. Meanwhile, a second fire, arson-sparked at the north end of Mandeville Canyon, began a rapid advance towards the Palisades.

At the time my wife Susan and I were living in the Palisades. Her first thought was of her horse that she kept at her parents' house, immediately inland from Zuma. Susan raced her VW bug up the highway just in time to see flames cresting the ridgeline on the hills north of her parents' house. With little time to spare she saddled her horse and worked her

In less than a half-hour flames had reached the backyard and were licking at the side of the garage. Just then a motorcycle appeared in the driveway, and an LAPD cop, who looked like a tall version of Arnold Schwarzenegger, yelled to us that there was a mandatory evacuation order in effect. Before we could answer, a gust blew a wall of flame over the house and driveway, and Paul Bunyan kicked his bike into gear and was gone.

When the wind gusted, flames were fanned high into the night sky and well above us on the second story. At those moments all we could do was flatten ourselves on the opposite side of the roof. Between gusts we would swing back into action and soak areas that had caught fire. Across the canyon we watched burning embers land on roofs and, with no one there to hose them down, start fires that grew gradually until the roofs and houses were ablaze. We saved Gramsey's house that night as well as the house next door. Brett and I smelled like we had been barbecued but were elated with the results of our amateur firefighting.

From Mandeville to Malibu, the fire burned more than 25,000 acres, destroyed some 230 houses and another 250 outbuildings and barns, and killed three people. Property losses exceeded \$70 million. Some of the greatest losses occurred, ironically, not in the hills but at the seashore. From Broadbeach, at the west end of Zuma, to Decker Canyon, a few miles up the coast, firebrands were blown from the hills over the coast highway and onto the roofs of beachfront houses, several of them the property of Hollywood celebrities.

As usual, both nature and human beings recovered quickly. Within a few years not only was the brush back, but also nearly every house rebuilt bigger and better than before. Moreover, construction had begun on new houses on

the few remaining vacant lots along Broadbeach. Nor did the fire do anything to slow appreciating real-estate values. The last of the Broadbeach lots each sold for more than a million dollars. When the Marblehead Land Company of Malibu first began selling the lots in 1940, they went for \$1,200 apiece.

Another fire of epic proportions swept through Malibu late in October 1993. The usual suspects were involved: a powerful Santa Ana wind, tinder-dry brush, and

campsites are scrutinized. Three of the fires were set by arsonists, and in four others, now under investigation, arson is suspected. The cost to fight the fires is estimated at more than \$40 million. Total property losses are expected to be in the hundreds of millions.

For the foreseeable future wildfires will be part of life in southern California. They will also grow more costly as not only more but also more expensive houses are built in areas that saw only

WITHIN A FEW YEARS NOT ONLY WAS THE **BRUSH BACK**, BUT ALSO NEARLY EVERY **HOUSE REBUILT BIGGER AND BETTER THAN BEFORE.**

an arsonist. This time the fire started closer to Topanga than Agoura and instead of burning the normal corridors to the beach took a more easterly route and scorched Carbon and Las Flores canyons. Those areas had not had a major burn in more than 20 years and erupted in balls of flame. By the time the firestorm had burnt its way to the sea, 323 houses were destroyed, and three people were killed. Among the newly homeless were Dick Van Dyke, Ali MacGraw, and Sean Penn. Many of the houses in the path of the fire had been built during the 1970s and '80s. A fire burning those same 18,000 acres in the 1960s would have destroyed only a fraction of the number houses razed in 1993.

Now in 2003, fire has again scorched southern California, burning across some 745,000 acres in eight separate major blazes, and several more minor ones, from the San Diego backcountry in the south to the Sespe Wilderness area of Ventura County in the north. More than 3,300 homes have been reduced to ashes, and 20 people have been killed, although the latter figure may increase as the charred remains of dwellings, vehicles, and wilderness

brush burn in the past. The only thing that can stop the blazes is fire. Unless controlled burns regularly check the growth of brush—an approach that is also ecologically sound—infernos will continue to visit southern California. And the brush is the only factor over which we have any control. Demented firebugs are rarely caught and will always be with us. So too will the Santa Ana wind, an awesome force of nature.

"There was a rough, desert wind blowing into Los Angeles that evening. It was one of those hot, dry Santa Anas that come down through the mountain passes and curl your hair, make your nerves jump and your skin itch," said Philip Marlow, Raymond Chandler's famous hard-boiled detective. "On nights like that every booze party ends up in a fight—and meek little house wives feel the edge of a carving knife and study their husbands' necks. Anything can happen on a night when the Santa Ana blows in from the desert." ■

Roger D. McGrath is an historian in California and the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes, among other books.

1001 Stereotypes

“Benevolent” imperialism sets up Arab strawmen.

By Neil Clark

SIX MONTHS INTO the occupation of Iraq significant, if subtle, changes are occurring in the way the War Party is endeavoring to portray the continuing conflict.

At first, Iraqi resistance was dismissed solely as the work of “Saddam loyalists.” Realizing that the scale of the attacks contradicted claims that the vast majority of Iraqis welcomed the invasion, “outside forces” began to be blamed. Now, as it is clear that Iraqis from all sects oppose the occupation, a third explanation has arisen: terrorism, anarchy, and criminality are prevalent in Iraq because terrorism, anarchy, and criminality are what Iraqis do.

Arabophobia has been part of Western culture since the Crusades, with Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden being only the latest in a long line of swarthy bogeymen to scare our children. For centuries the Arab, despite bequeathing us the telescope, the pendulum, the watch, soap, chemistry, and modern arithmetic, has played the role of villain, seducer of our women, hustler, and thief—the barbarian lurking menacingly at the gates of civilization. In the late 20th century, new images emerged: the fanatical terrorist, the stone thrower, the suicide bomber. Now, as the Project for a New American Century suffers its first major setback in the back streets of Baghdad and Basra, Arabophobia, the one form of racism about which Hollywood does not make films, has been given a new lease of life.

“I read T.E. Lawrence before I came here,” a British officer deployed to Iraq

told London’s *Mail on Sunday*. “A century ago he recognized dishonesty was inherent in Arab society. Today is the same. They do nothing for love and nothing at all if they can help it.” The attitudes of the officer, shocking though they are, only mirror those of the people who sent him to war. Scratch a neocon, and you find an Arabophobe.

Condoleezza Rice has berated Arabs on the “need to change their behavior.” Douglas Feith, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, has talked of Israel’s “moral superiority” over its neighbors. Zev Chafets, a columnist for the *New York Daily News*, believes Arab cultures to be “irrational” and that “nothing can be done to improve the collective mental health” of their societies. Fellow scribbler and serial regime-changer Mark Steyn refers to the “boneheads” on the Arab Street and the need to bring the Middle East into “the civilized world.” And Defense Policy Board member Richard Perle, when asked about the fears of Egyptian intellectuals that war with Iraq would cause an Arab backlash replied, “Egyptians can barely govern their own country, we really don’t need advice on how to govern ours.”

For the first time, we have a U.S. administration that talks of de-Arabizing the Middle East—the ultimate Perleian dream of each Arab nation governed by a clone of Ahmad Chalabi, bazaars replaced by shopping malls, and Arab hospitality (not good for business) replaced by Western corporate ethics. Bush’s entourage is not content with

making threats to Syria and now even talks of “destabilizing” Egypt—hitherto regarded as a staunch U.S. ally that for 30 years has done almost everything Washington has asked. It’s one thing to have a policy objective of making Saddam Hussein “nervous,” but only a dyed-in-the-wool Arabophobe would advocate extending the strategy to Hosni Mubarak—as James “World War IV” Woolsey did earlier this year.

It is not hard to find evidence of the increased pervasiveness of neocon-induced Arabophobia in the American and British media, whether intentional or not. Contrast anchorman Jeremy Paxman’s very differing handling of Professor Ruth Wedgewood, an American neoconservative, and Dr. Imad Moustapha, Syria’s Deputy Ambassador to the U.S., on the BBC’s flagship current-affairs program “Newsnight” recently. Wedgewood was treated with a deference Paxman might ordinarily reserve for his great aunt, Moustapha with withering contempt and studied condescension. Wedgewood was speaking on behalf of a junta that launched an illegal war of aggression on grounds that have proven to be false. Moustapha was the representative of a country that, however we view its domestic policies, is in no breach of international law and has called unequivocally for the removal of all WMD from the Middle East. The “Newsnight” interview was sadly typical, being only the latest of many examples on British and U.S. television where Arab interviewees have been treated in a brazenly discourteous way.

Hollywood, for all its posturing about fighting racism, has played its full part in reinforcing the new wave of Arabophobia. In the past, Arabs, when they weren't civilized-women-seducing Sheikhs or dastardly, scheming Grand Viziers, played only marginal roles on the silver screen—existing solely for Europeans and Americans to barter with or order drinks from during their amorous adventures with other Europeans and Americans in Casablanca, Algiers, or Cairo.

Now, with the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of other enemies to the homeland, Arabs are portrayed in an even less favorable light. According to research by Jack Shaheen, author of *The TV Arab*, 21 major movies in the last 10 years have shown the U.S. military killing Arabs. In "G.I. Jane," Demi Moore gains her stripes by killing Arabs; "Patriot Games" and "Executive Decision" are other recent films in which Arabs have been in the line of fire. In a relatively short space of time, Arabs have replaced Red Indians and Red Russians as the motion-picture industry's favorite bad guys. With such a negative image of Arabs drummed into them day after day, it was not hard to persuade Westerners who had never lived in Arab lands, nor seen the day-to-day reality of a remarkably kindly and hospitable people, to believe whatever their governments told them those devilish Iraqis were up to.

Critical to the neocon plan to obtain control of the resources of the Middle East and eliminate all potential threats to Israel is a need to portray Arabs not just as mendacious (not to be trusted to come clean about weapons programs), but also "barely capable" of running their own countries without benign outside interference. The neocon notion that Arabs need civilizing and assistance in shaping their future differs very little from the attitudes of the first British

imperialists in Africa over a century ago.

Condemning Arabophobia does not mean minimizing the problem of resurgent Islamic fundamentalism or glossing over the activities of such groups as al-Qaeda. The 9/11 hijackers, were after all Arabs and not, as Mark Steyn never tires of reminding us, Swedish nuns. It would also be absurd to deny the problems that most Arab states face. Freedom of speech is at a premium throughout the Arab world. Very few Arab states have developed pluralist political structures. Economic growth, due in large part to high defense spending, has been sluggish. But does anyone, except the inhabitants of Planet Neocon, seriously believe that a series of destructive wars and military occupations by Western powers will improve the situation?

Whilst it is fashionable to decry Arab governments, and in particular Ba'athist ones, let us also not deny the achievements made since liberation from the Ottoman and the European colonial

yokes. The British and American officers who now talk of Iraqi dishonesty and seek to portray Iraq as a backward and savage land would rather we forget that until the imposition of sanctions by Britain and the U.S., independent, Ba'athist Iraq, though a dictatorship, had the most developed infrastructure, the best health care, and the finest universities of any country in the Middle East.

"Iraqis are the world's best dodgers and thieves—they are descended from a direct line of Ali Babas." So says Corporal Kevin Harnley of the Royal Engineers, bemoaning the stealing of British-issue police uniforms. The irony—that he has been an accomplice in one of the most audacious smash and grab enterprises in the history of thievery—seems entirely lost on him. ■

Neil Clark is journalist specializing in Middle Eastern and Balkan affairs. An abridged version of this article appeared in the Guardian.

American Story

Our allies no longer believe our national narrative.

By William Pfaff

PORTO, PORTUGAL—More than nine months into the Iraq crisis, meetings between West Europeans and Americans of good will remain strained non-dialogues in which most of the American participants find it hard to admit that the catastrophic loss of American reputation abroad has anything to do with them.

Such a meeting in this old port city recently produced the usual American citations of scandalous incidents of foreign anti-Americanism.

The German Marshall Fund statistics that were circulated show that only 8 percent of Germans today want the U.S. to remain the sole superpower (it was 22 percent a year ago), while 70 percent of Germans want Europe to become a superpower.

(Not cited were figures from the explosive European Union opinion survey just published by Brussels, showing that 53 percent of Europeans polled in 15 countries consider the U.S. just as much of a threat to world peace as Iran

and North Korea, and citing Israel as the biggest of all current threats to world peace.)

The Americans' response to such information is nearly always that there must have been some failure in communications. Perhaps the U.S. should "consult" more, but basically it's up to the European governments to take steps to correct this anti-Americanism. If not, Americans are going to become seriously upset with the Europeans.

"It's as if they can't hear," an Irishman said, who had thought himself one of America's best friends abroad.

Let me offer a metaphor. Every nation has a "story" it tells to explain its place in the flow of history and to give meaning to its actions.

The American story since 1942 (and before) is well known and is considered by Americans and others a story reflecting responsibility and high-mindedness, whatever its inevitable component of national interest.

Despite aberrations in Vietnam and Latin America, the American story of responsible world leadership has been accepted among the democracies as an essentially valid account of the role modern America played during the years leading up to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The problem today is that in the view of many others the story has changed. Another one has taken its place. Most Americans deny that this is so.

Because of the powerful Calvinist influence—predestinarian and theocratic—on American Protestantism, the American story has always described a confrontation between the Elect and the Evil.

When the Soviet Union no longer fulfilled the latter role, Washington tried out several possible successors, finally settling on the "rogue nations": those professing radically un-American ideas and giving evidence of wanting to possess nuclear deterrents to protect themselves from foreign intervention. Their feebleness, however, tended to diminish their credibility in the role of global Evil.

Then came 9/11. The problem was solved. The rogue nations now became the Axis of Evil. They were integral to a vast international threat, capable of striking the United States itself. Moreover, this threat more or less resembled (less, actually, than more) the clash between civilizations that Professor Samuel Huntington had warned would be the "next world war."

Americans declared, "Everything has changed; nothing can be the same again." The nation was at war with "Terror."

Terror expressed itself through al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Palestinian suicide-bombers, South American narco-terrorists, Chechen separatists in Russia, and Moro separatists in the southern Philippines. Terror was a ubiquitous force that

could ultimately manifest itself in weapons of mass destruction, supplied by the rogue states, raining down on American and European cities.

Hence preventive wars were necessary; Afghanistan and Iraq had to be invaded to seize Terror's leaders and their nuclear and biological weapons. International legality must stand aside, etc.

But what actually has happened during the past nine months is something Americans have yet to grasp and that others have yet to say out loud. People outside the United States have stopped believing the American story.

They don't think terrorism is a single force the United States is going to defeat. They say terrorism is a way people wage war when they don't have F-16s or armored divisions.

They say that Chechens, Moros, Taliban, Colombian insurgents, Palestinian bombers, and Iraqi enemies of the U.S. occupation do not really make up a global phenomenon the world must mobilize to defeat. They say all this looks more or less like what history has always been like, at least in troubled times.

They say that, actually, they had never really believed this story in the first place. They had listened to it because Washington said it, and they respected Washington. Now they don't.

This is the reason there is trouble between the United States and the countries that have been its allies. And this is why it may indeed prove true that between them, things "will never be the same again." ■

William Pfaff's book on the war on terrorism, A Chronicle of Fear, Anger and Failure, will be published early in the new year. He is a columnist for the International Herald Tribune in Paris.

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In Rumsfeld's Shop

A senior Air Force officer watches as the neocons consolidate their Pentagon coup.

By Karen Kwiatkowski

Lt. Col. Karen Kwiatkowski recently retired from the U.S. Air Force. Her final posting was as an analyst at the Pentagon. Below is the first of three installments describing her experience there. They provide a unique view of the Department of Defense during a period of intense ideological upheaval, as the United States prepared to launch—for the first time in its history—a “preventive” war.

IN EARLY MAY 2002, I was looking forward to retirement from the United States Air Force in about a year. I had a cushy job in the Pentagon's Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, International Security Affairs, Sub-Saharan Africa.

In the previous two years, I had published two books on African security issues and had passed my comprehensive doctoral exams at Catholic University. I was very pleased with the administration's Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Sub-Saharan Africa, former Marine and Senator Helms staffer Michael Westphal, and was ready to start thinking about my dissertation and my life after the military.

When Mike called me in to his office, I thought I was getting a new project or perhaps that one of my many suggestions of fun things to do with Africa policy had been accepted. But the look on his face clued me in that this was going to be one of those meetings where somebody wasn't leaving happy. After a

quick rank check, I had a good idea which one it would be.

There was a position in Near East South Asia (NESA) that they needed to fill right away. I wasn't interested. They phrased the question another way: “We have been tasked to send a body over to Bill Luti. Can we send you?” I resisted—until I slowly guessed that in true bureaucratic fashion and can-do military tradition my name had already been sent over. This little soirée in Mike's office was my farewell.

I went back to my office and e-mailed a buddy in the Joint Staff. Bob wrote back, “Write down everything you see.” I didn't do it, but these most wise words from a trusted friend proved the first of three omens I would soon receive.

I showed up down the hall a few days later. It looked just like the office from which I came, newer blue cubicles, narrow hallways piled high with copy paper, newspapers, unused equipment, and precariously leaning map rolls. The same old concrete-building smell pervaded, maybe a little mustier. I was taking over the desk of a CIA loaner officer. Joe had been called back early to the agency and was hoping to go to Yemen. Before he left, he briefed me on his biggest project: ongoing negotiations with the Qatari sheiks over who was paying for improvements to Al Udeid Air Base. I was familiar with Al Udeid from my time on the Air Staff a few years before. Back then we seemed to like the Saudis, and our Saudi bases were a few

hours closer to the action than Al Udeid, so the U.S. played a woo-me game. Now that we needed and wanted Al Udeid to be finished quickly and done up right, it was time for the emirs to play hard to get. Joe gave me the rundown on counterterrorism ops in Yemen and an upcoming agreement with the Bahraini monarch to extend our military-security agreement, locking in a relationship just in case those Bahraini experiments with democracy actually took off.

I had an obligatory meeting with the deputy director, Paul Hulley, Navy Captain. This meeting followed a phone call in which I hadn't been as compliant as I should have been with a Navy Captain, and since Paul had handled my bad attitude with candor and grace, I was determined to like him—and I did. I gave him my story: I was a year from retirement and, more importantly, I was in a car pool. I'd be working a 7:15 to 17:30 schedule. He was neither charmed nor impressed. He advised that I'd need to be working a lot longer than that. Then we stepped in to meet Deputy Undersecretary of Defense Bill Luti. I knew Luti had a Ph.D. in international relations from the Fletcher School at Tufts and was a recently retired Navy Captain himself. At this point, I didn't know what a neocon was or that they had already swarmed over the Pentagon, populating various hives of policy and planning like African hybrids, with the same kind of sting reflex. Luti just seemed happy to have me there as a warm body.

My second omen was the super-size bottles of Tums and Tylenol Joe left in his desk. The third occurred as I was chatting with my new office mate, a career civil servant working the Egypt desk. As the conversation moved into Middle East news and politics, she mentioned that if I wanted to be successful here, I shouldn't say anything positive about the Palestinians. In 19 years of military service, I had never heard such a politically laden warning on such an obscure topic to such an inconsequential player. I had the sense of a single click, the sound tectonic plates might make as they shift deep under the earth and lock into a new resting position—or when the trigger is pulled in a game of Russian roulette.

I had never worked for neocons before, and the philosophical journey to understand what they stood for was not a trip I wanted to take. But my conversations with coworkers and some of the people I was meeting in the office opened my eyes to something strange and fascinating. Those who had watched the transition from Clintonista to Bushite knew that something calculated had happened to NESAs. Key per-

being a permanent civilian (occasionally military) professional is to help bring the new appointee up to speed, ensure office continuity, and act as a resource relating to regional histories and policies. To remove that continuity factor seemed contraindicated, but at the time, I didn't realize that the expertise on Middle East policy was being brought in from a variety of outside think tanks.

Another civilian replacement about which I was told was that of the long-time Israel/Syria/Lebanon desk, Larry Hanauer. Word was that he was even-handed with Israel, there had been complaints from one of his countries, and as a gesture of good will, David Schenker, fresh from the Washington Institute, was serving as the new Israel/Syria/Lebanon desk.

I came to share with many NESAs colleagues a kind of unease, a sense that something was awry. What seemed out of place was the strong and open pro-Israel and anti-Arab orientation in an ostensibly apolitical policy-generation staff within the Pentagon. There was a sense that politics like these might play better at the State Department or the

wasn't entirely clear to me, but he would research bits of data in which Bill Luti was interested and peruse Arabic-language media for quotations or events that could be used to demonize Saddam Hussein or link him to nastiness beyond his own borders and with unsavory characters.

While I was still hoping to be sent back to the Africa desk, I was also angling to take the NESAs North Africa desk that would be vacated in July. During this time, May through mid-July, the news in the daily briefing was focused on war planning for the Iraq invasion. Slides from a CENTCOM brief appeared on the front page of the *New York Times* on July 5. A few weeks later, Secretary Donald Rumsfeld ordered an investigation into who leaked this information. The Air Force Office of Special Investigation was tasked to work with the FBI, and everyone in NESAs was supposed to be interviewed.

My interview, by two fresh-faced OSI investigators, occurred sometime in July. One handed me a copy of an article by William Arkin discussing Iraq-war planning published in May 2002 in the *Los Angeles Times* and asked if I knew Arkin. I didn't recall the name, but when I checked I learned that he had spent time at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). Apparently, Arkin had facilitated a leak six weeks before, but it hadn't caused a fuss. I pointed out that I did know a person with major SAIS links who probably knew Arkin. They leaned forward eagerly. "Have you ever heard of Paul Wolfowitz?" They looked puzzled, so I called up the bio of the deputy secretary and showed them how he ran SAIS during most of the Clinton years. I suggested the investigation look at the answers to the *cui bono* question. I also told them no one in the military or at CENTCOM would leak war plans because as Rumsfeld

I HAD NEVER WORKED FOR NEOCONS BEFORE, AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY STOOD FOR WAS NOT A TRIP I WANTED TO TAKE.

sonnel, long-time civilian professionals holding the important billets, had been replaced early in the transition. The Office Director, second in command and normally a professional civilian regional expert, was vacant. Joe McMillan had been moved to the NESAs Center over at National Defense University. This was strange because in a transition the whole reason for the Office Director

National Security Council, not the Pentagon, where we considered ourselves objective and hard boiled.

The anti-Arab orientation I perceived was only partially confirmed by things I saw. Towards the end of the summer, we welcomed to the office as a temporary special assistant to Bill Luti an Egyptian-American naval officer, Lt. (later Lt. Cmdr.) Youssef Aboul-Enein. His job

accurately said, it gets people killed. But the politicians who were anxious to get the American people over the mental hump that the Bush administration was going to send troops to Iraq were not military and had both motive and opportunity to leak.

During the summer, I assumed the duties of the North Africa desk. Part of my job was to schedule and complete two overdue bilateral meetings with longtime U.S. security partners Morocco and Tunisia. Bilateral meetings historically included a tailored regional-security briefing addressing Weapons of Mass Destruction threats and status. In planning my upcoming bilateral agendas and attendee lists, I discovered that Bill Luti had certain issues regarding the regional-security briefing, in particular with the aspects relating to WMD and terrorism.

There had been an incident shortly before I arrived in which the Defense Intelligence Officer had been prohibited from giving his briefing to a particular country only hours before he was scheduled. During the summer, the brief was simply not scheduled for another important bilateral meeting. Instead, a briefing was prepared by another policy office that worked on non-proliferation issues. This briefing was not a product of the Defense Intelligence Agency or CIA but instead came from the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

At the end of the summer of 2002, new space had been found upstairs on the fifth floor for an "expanded Iraq desk." It would be called the Office of Special Plans. We were instructed at a staff meeting that this office was not to be discussed or explained, and if people in the Joint Staff, among others, asked, we were to offer no comment. We were also told that one of the products of this office would be talking points that all desk officers would use verbatim in the preparation of their background documents.

The CIA Chief in Baghdad has provided a significant appraisal of the situation in Iraq.

The report is a pessimistic assessment that predicts resistance to American occupation will grow stronger, wider, and more effective. The Chief concluded that unless there were major, prompt, and widespread policy changes, the situation would deteriorate beyond American control. What makes the appraisal of even greater consequence is that the situation report, usually meant to inform the Director of Central Intelligence, was endorsed by and contained supporting comments from the Coalition Administrator Jerry Bremer, who has been reluctant to report his personal views to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld (to whom he reports directly). In effect, Bremer has used a CIA reporting channel to ensure that his own views are presented to the President without a Pentagon filter. Bremer's supporting comments contained within the CIA report will make it difficult for hardliners in the administration to dismiss, and Condoleezza Rice will probably ensure that the president personally reads it.



Anyone wondering what Condoleezza Rice's Iraq Stabilization Group (ISG) has been doing

to stabilize Iraq can continue to wonder, as the organization has adopted a profile so low as to be nearly invisible. The ISG's four deputy chairmen together comprise the most forgettable group of government appointees since AD 39, when the Emperor Caligula named his favorite horse Incitatus Consul of Rome. Insiders believe that ISG was created to fire a shot across the bow of Donald Rumsfeld without threatening him enough to force him to resign. For that reason, it was designed to be both high profile and low octane, with presidential confidant Rice at the helm and a group of political lightweights stoking the boilers. The responsibilities of ISG are largely undefined, and its recommendations are only of significance insofar as they emanate from Rice herself. None of the four deputies is enough of a player to have his phone calls returned by the mandarins at State and the Pentagon, but the message being sent is that Iraq is not going well and somewhere, someday, somehow, someone might be held accountable.



Karl Rove has convinced the White House to implement an accelerated American departure from Iraq

due to polls demonstrating sinking support for the war and occupation as casualties rise. The president, avoiding mention of Iraq and focusing on the economy and job creation instead, did not initially comment about the helicopter shoot-down that killed 16 American soldiers, while the Pentagon has prohibited media coverage of flag-draped coffins returning to the United States. The process of turning over security and political control to the Iraqis will now take place much faster than originally planned. Whether a one-year crash program of Iraqization will be any more successful than Vietnamization is questionable. The State Department is highly skeptical and is warning that a rapid withdrawal will lead to unpleasant consequences, throwing away both the military victory and the prospect of a stable regime. What is certain is that many decisions made in Baghdad will be based on American domestic political concerns not on a sober assessment of the realities inside Iraq.

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is partner in Cannistraro Associates, an international security consultancy.

About that same time, my education on the history and generation of the neoconservative movement had completed its first stage. I now understood that neoconservatism was both unhistorical and based on the organizing construct of “permanent revolution.” I had studied the role played by hawkish former Sen. Scoop Jackson (D-Wash.) and the neoconservative drift of formerly traditional magazines like *National Review* and think tanks like the Heritage Foundation. I had observed that many of the neoconservatives in the Pentagon not only had limited military experience, if any at all, but they also advocated theories of war that struck me as rejections of classical liberalism, natural law, and constitutional strictures. More than that, the pressure of the intelligence community to conform, the rejection of it when it failed to produce intelligence suitable for supporting the “Iraq is an imminent threat to the United States” agenda, and the amazing things I was hearing in both Bush and Cheney speeches told me that not only do neoconservatives hold a theory based on ideas not embraced by the American mainstream, but they also have a collective contempt for fact.

By August, I was morally and intellectually frustrated by my powerlessness against what increasingly appeared to be a philosophical hijacking of the Pentagon. Indeed, I had sworn an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic, but perhaps we were never really expected to take it all that seriously ... ■

To be continued

In a coming installment, Lieutenant Colonel Kwiatkowski relates what happens when a group of Israeli generals treads the well-worn (for them) path to Douglas Feith's office.

From Left Bank to Right

Jean-Paul Sartre's last confession

By Richard Cummings

LITTLE ATTENTION WAS PAID in the liberal American media to the death of Benny Levy at age 58 in Jerusalem on Oct. 15, 2003. This was not accidental: he is someone the Left would rather forget. Jean-Paul Sartre's personal secretary from 1974 until Sartre's death in 1980, Levy conducted a series of interviews with the aging and blind philosopher who had turned down the Nobel Prize. The Paris weekly magazine, *Le Nouvel Observateur* published the essays a month before Sartre died.

The French Left, including Sartre's companion, Simone de Beauvoir, denounced Levy for either fabricating the interviews or manipulating the infirm Sartre into renouncing his Marxist ideology in favor of a messianic form of Judaism, as Levy himself had done.

Levy, had been a self-described “intellectual terrorist” during the student uprisings in Paris in 1968, when, under his *nom de guerre*, Pierre Victor, he led one of the most radical Maoist factions and was prominent in Marxist-Leninist circles. Disillusioned by socialism, Levy had begun to study the work of the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas when Sartre engaged him as his secretary.

Just prior to Sartre's death, the great existentialist confirmed the contents of the interviews, acknowledging that he had, indeed, renounced the Left. “Marxism is supreme,” Sartre had once proclaimed. Now, in the interviews, he ridicules Marx: “All Marx's distinctions among superstructures are a fine bit of work, but it's utterly false because the primary relationship of individual to

individual is something else, and that is what we're here to discover.”

A few years ago, I spent the summer at the School of Criticism and Theory at Cornell. We read much of Sartre and discussed him *ad nauseum*. But nowhere to be found were these interviews, republished in 1996 under the title *Hope Now* because much of what Sartre has to say in them concerns the kind of hope that repudiates the false hope of dialectical materialism.

The Left firmly believes that the only reason communism failed was because the Duke French department did not run it. Their defense mechanisms are so powerful that they can obliterate reality. Sartre, to them, will always be the anti-capitalist Marxist who believed people in the Soviet Union were freer than anywhere else. To them, Benny Levy's path was an unforgivable apostasy that contaminated the legacy of their greatest intellectual hero. They go on reading Sartre on man's freedom to choose his own fate, ignoring Sartre's ultimate conclusion that freedom requires an acceptance of a spiritual life, including a belief in the resurrection. Sartre was convinced that the Left was utterly finished, never to return. A better society could come about, not through ideology, but through ethics.

To a certain extent, the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard concluded as much when he invented post-modernism and declared Marxism dead. But the news travels slowly to the American campuses, where there is no tolerance for dissent from a heavy orthodoxy

of the Left. And in liberal circles, if you are religious at all, you are crazy—a legacy of Freud, who considered all religious belief to be a form of neurosis.

Sartre comes across in the interviews as a deeply thoughtful and courageous person, capable of looking at his life and long-held beliefs objectively. Politics, for him, is an extension of ethics, with the lowest form of politics being the dictatorship of a Marxist political party. But in the United States, his analysis has no audience. Both the Democratic and Republican parties have been hijacked by various forms of the doctrinaire Left, from vulgar Marxism in the party of Jefferson to a virulent form of Trotskyism in the party of Lincoln. There is no room in either of them for a thoughtful person for whom ethics is of paramount importance.

The Left in America distorted theory to suit its ideological ends, while the Right resists theory altogether. In a sense, this is a reflection of an anti-intellectualism that Tocqueville recognized as a central weakness of America. If the French love ideas and hate facts, and the British love facts and hate ideas, the Americans love solutions, which they seek in the absence of ideas and facts.

The war in Iraq is a case in point. No one pressing for it gave a hoot for the facts, and there was not a single valid idea for what to do after Iraq was occupied. The failures of the American intelligence establishment that led to 9/11 can be traced to a rigid unthoughtfulness that permeates our institutions. Nihilism is the *modus vivendi* of an American culture that disguises it as pragmatism.

Sartre's legacy is that he dared to think. He realized that his serious thoughts were constrained by wishful thinking. The pursuit of a socialist utopia caused him to blind himself to a painful reality that only his approaching death enabled him to face. But he was at least able to engage in discourse.

The task for American conservatives is to promote discourse, to become the new American intellectuals, even as they pursue a politics that is both practical and inspirational. If Sartre was correct that the idea of the Left is finished, then conservatives have an obligation to engage in a meaningful exchange of ideas that has become unacceptable within the Democratic and Republican parties. Sartre concluded that the idea of political parties has also come to an end and that because of the fragmentation of society, the possibility of coalition is non-existent. This is confirmed in America, where the major political parties are nothing but a collection of ego trips bound together by money, a realization that engenders the apathy that permits the mediocre to seize power.

What hope is there now? We have gone through a cycle of extremes, from the excessive self-sacrifice of the Sixties, to the excessive self-indulgence of the Seventies, with varieties of both haunting the culture for the next two

decades. From Dr. Ruth to Dr. Phil, false prophets of the media have taken hold of the American consciousness, blurring all ethical considerations. There is a total lack of the sense of the sacred that Sartre finally saw as central to human existence. The philosopher, who opposed both the French-Indochina and Algerian wars, would never have accepted the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. He would never have countenanced the invasion of Iraq.

Is it possible to generate a serious intellectual life in America? Maybe not. But a good starting point would be the Sartre-Levy interviews. If enough people read *Hope Now* and thought about it seriously, there would be a slight chance. But I'm not betting on it. The defense mechanisms of the Left have become the defense mechanisms of the entire country. ■

Richard Cummings holds the Ph.D. in Social and Political Sciences from Cambridge University.

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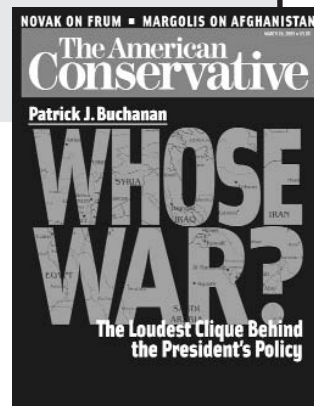
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Arts & Letters

FILM

[*Master and Commander*]

Before Trafalgar Was a Square

By Steve Sailer

"Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" tries to lure literate middle-aged men back to the movie theater by delivering an action blockbuster of rare intelligence and authenticity. Esteemed Australian director Peter Weir spent a whopping \$135 million crafting a splendid film out of the late Patrick O'Brian's cult novels about the British Navy during the Napoleonic Wars.

Three years after the 1966 death of C.S. Forester, author of the rollicking Horatio Hornblower sea tales, O'Brian published *Master and Commander*, raising the Age of Nelson genre to a new plane of literary quality and technical accuracy. O'Brian reads as if Jane Austen had written a precursor to Tom Clancy's *Hunt for Red October* based on her seagoing brothers' adventures in those pre-industrial technological marvels, the Royal Navy's frigates.

O'Brian's series of 20 books details the friendship of the hearty captain Jack Aubrey and the rationalist ship's surgeon Stephen Maturin. Their odd-couple camaraderie resembles that of the 18th-century explorer Capt. James Cook and his naturalist Joseph Banks (the subject of a biography by O'Brian) or their futuristic counterparts in Capt. James Kirk and Mr. Spock/Dr. McCoy. Indeed, O'Brian's novels appeal primarily to men who are a little too old for

science fiction and fantasy, whose interests have matured from the future to the past, from the imaginary to the intensely real.

While O'Brian's admirers, such as George Will and David Mamet, are extremely articulate, they are a small elite compared to the legions who read *The Lord of the Rings* or *Harry Potter*. Indeed, I gave up halfway through the first novel, finding myself at sea amidst all the jargon about the "mizzen topgallant staysail" and the like.

Writer Orrin Judd explains, "The reason O'Brian's books so effectively transport us to another time and place is because they seem to have been written there and then. His mission is not to explain that epoch to us, but to present it for our consideration, nearly unadorned by modern sensibilities ... The books have the quality, not of historical novels at all, but instead of classic tales newly rediscovered."

Weir preserved much of that uncompromising archaism in his film's sometimes unfathomable dialogue. Fortunately, the director of "Gallipoli" and "Witness" is expert at showing while telling, so I never lost the thread for long. Still, "Master and Commander" requires more mental effort than is common in films with a "Pearl Harbor"-sized budget.

The filmmakers lifted the basic plot from the 10th novel, *The Far Side of the World* but integrated a greatest-hits collection of clever gambits from other books.

In 1805, with nothing but the Royal Navy standing between Napoleon and the conquest of England, Aubrey is ordered to pursue an advanced 44-gun French privateer in his elderly 28-gun frigate, even though his ship appears too weak to fight and too slow to run away. Undaunted, Aubrey pursues his quarry

from the coast of Brazil all the way around Cape Horn to the Pacific's exotic Galapagos Islands, uninhabited volcanic extrusions that look like God's own ash-tray. The film conveys how exciting was the freedom enjoyed by sea captains, in an age when land travel was no easier than in Roman times, to be able to take off on one's own discretion for the far side of the world.

It would be heartening if this movie proved hugely profitable, but I'm not counting on it. Its demographic appeal seems quite narrow. Some ladies may want to see Russell Crowe ("Gladiator") as Captain Aubrey. He is indeed perfectly cast—no serious actor is a better action star and no action star is a better serious actor. Still, "Master and Commander" takes place almost wholly at sea, and no women have speaking roles. Crowe is putting on weight as he ages, making him even more of a man's man star. Here, he plays the kind of leader that men wish to serve under—fair and amiable in peace but as cunning as Odysseus in battle.

The movie relegates Maturin, portrayed by Paul Bettany (best known as Crowe's imaginary friend in "A Beautiful Mind"), to second bananahood, although one recurring twist is evocative. Maturin, a dedicated naturalist, seems on the verge of conceiving the Theory of Natural Selection 30 years before Darwin's enlightening visit to the Galapagos ... if only he can get enough time ashore to taxonomize the storied wildlife. But exasperating duty repeatedly drags him off to military, rather than scientific, glory.

After World War I, Churchill wrote, "War, which used to be cruel and magnificent, has now become cruel and squalid." "Master and Commander" depicts war at its most fascinating and least repellent, as a few hundred experts

duel in gorgeous machines, with innocent civilians safely away over the blue horizon. ■

Rated PG-13 for intense battle sequences, primitive surgery, and brief salty language.

Steve Sailer is TAC's film critic and a reporter for UPI.

BOOKS

[*Mexifornia: A State Of Becoming*, Victor Davis Hanson, Encounter Books, 150 pages]

Unnatural Disaster

By Peter Brimelow

ALL HAPPY FAMILIES resemble each other, Tolstoy famously said, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. The same is true, I pointed out in the first issue of *TAC* just over a year ago, of books on immigration policy. Pro-immigration books are interchangeably triumphalist, data-deprived, and lyrical about the authors' grandparents from Russia. But immigration-reform books are grimly focused on quite separate areas—basically because they actually have something to say about America's emerging immigration disaster, the result of the floodgate-opening 1965 Immigration Act and the simultaneous elite decision to stop enforcing the law against illegal immigrants.

Victor Davis Hanson's *Mexifornia* is the third best-seller on this immigration disaster in three years. (Hey! Maybe commercial publishers will—nah, *fuhgeddaboutit*.) In 2002, Michelle Malkin's *Invasion* demonstrated that the U.S. admissions process was fundamentally flawed, regardless of what entry criteria were to be applied. In 2001, Patrick J. Buchanan's *Death of the West* put U.S. immigration policy's skew

toward the Third World in the grand perspective of First World demographic and cultural decline.

Mexifornia is a wonderful little book. It makes a distinctive contribution to the growing literature of immigration reform, which is inexorably eroding the ideological foundations of official immigration enthusiasm.

And *Mexifornia's* reception by establishment conservatism has been surprisingly favorable. Even the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, notoriously Stalinist in its suppression of immigration critics, permitted an uneasily respectful review. It is painfully apparent that this is because of the accident of military historian Hanson's cheerleading for the Iraq War in *National Review* and elsewhere. (In contrast, establishment liberalism has ignored the book, as it did Malkin's. No review has appeared in the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*.)

Hanson's free pass may very well embolden others to defy the taboo against debating immigration. I think they will be in for a sad surprise. Nor do I expect Hanson to advance the cause of immigration reform much farther because of limitations that are also apparent in this book. But this does not detract from his contribution.

The great strength of *Mexifornia* is its intense focus on Hanson's personal experience. He grew up as a fifth-generation Californian on the small farm originally settled by his forbears close to

wonder if the artist really understands what he is saying.

In the last three decades, Hanson reports, his close-knit hometown has been literally overwhelmed by illegal immigration. It has tripled in size and is now, he says, "somewhere between 60 and 90 percent Hispanic"—hard to tell because so many are illegal and transient. In 1970, Selma's population, including exotic rural-California strains like Sikhs, Japanese, and Armenians, was melting-potting peacefully into one unilingual-English community. Today, Hanson says "he rarely hears English spoken" in his neighborhood. The public school he attended is now 95 percent Mexican. Of course, there were many Mexican-Americans students in his day. But no Spanish was allowed even in the playground, and an Anglo-conformity was imposed that Hanson believes has now been abandoned, although it worked—producing the middle-class Mexican-American contemporaries whose names he keeps earnestly dropping.

(Hanson is almost certainly right about his old school. The single hysterical review of *Mexifornia* that I've been able to find appeared in his local *Fresno Bee*, Sept. 26, 2003, by one Paul A. Garcia. Incredibly—or all too credibly, if you're familiar with this controversy—Garcia complained that "Hanson's use of the nontechnical and inflammatory term 'illegal alien' provokes hatred and con-

HANSON'S FREE PASS MAY VERY WELL EMBOLDEN OTHERS TO DEFEY THE TABOO AGAINST DEBATING IMMIGRATION.

Selma in the San Joaquin Valley. He continued to work the property while teaching classics at nearby California State University, Fresno. In vital respects, this is a literary memoir rather than a public-policy tract. Its insights are intuitive rather than analytical. They are nonetheless penetrating for that—indeed, possibly more so. But you do sometimes

tempt." The *Bee* described Garcia as ... a "former high school vice principal.")

The value of Hanson's innocent artist's eye is apparent in his unflinching description of how 30 years of mass immigration have reduced his corner of the once-Golden State to ruin and rubble.

In essence, the frontier has returned

to Selma—but far bloodier. The first victims are Mexican illegals themselves, vulnerable because they are unknown and deal entirely in cash, the victims of unsolved murders in their hundreds at the hands of Mexican thieves. But the physical safety of Hanson's own farming family is regularly threatened by drug dealers, gang members, and other trespassers. All farm equipment not locked up is stolen. The rural mailbox system that has been in use for nearly a century is now breaking down because everything put there is routinely looted—including an edited manuscript of *Mexifornia!* Trash is constantly dumped on his land, although city garbage pickup is cheap. Cars, unlicensed and uninsured, are repeatedly crashed into his vines, doing costly damage, by drunken Mexicans who promptly vanish. He is forbidden to haul the cars away for scrap but must wait for the county to impound them in case their owners might want them back. "Nineteenth century ailments"—adult whopping cough, hepatitis, tetanus—have been brought back to California by illegal immigrants no longer subject to Ellis-Island-type health checks, along with extraordinary rates of venereal disease. Interactions with local government have become a "disaster" as no one on either side of the counter speaks English. The Mexican woman who runs a stoplight and hits his daughter's car is let off by the Mexican-American cop—after he gets her phone number.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SANTA BARBARA HAS **75 COURSES ON CHICANO ISSUES**, ONE COURSE ON "CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION," **NONE ON THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR AND WORLD WAR II.**

These, of course, are simply the typical external characteristics of a Third World society. For the inner moral symptoms, see Roger McGrath's May 10 *TAC* article on how the southern California town of South Gate, originally populated by Danes and Okies, passed

into Mexican control and promptly reverted to Mexican-style corruption and collapse. Hanson mentions another such town near him: Parlier, plagued by corruption, now "little more than a ward of the federal government," which pays for its "nice streets, homes, clinics and schools."

All of which makes me as mad as hell—and I'm merely an immigrant myself, having arrived in a breathtakingly-beautiful California in what now appears to have been the pivotal year of 1970.

But Hanson, who has much more reason to be angry, seems to view it all with a melancholy fatalism. His discussion of solutions is brief and, beyond a vague wish to seal the borders, so lacking in the necessary brutal detail as to make me suspect he just hasn't thought much about the subject—deeply distressing as it must be to a self-proclaimed Democrat and heir to the herbivorous Scandinavian political tradition.

This is another reason for *Mexifornia's* mild reception. It just didn't frighten immigration enthusiasts enough.

For me, the greatest triumph of Hanson's literary method is his complete demolition of the economic case for illegal immigration—and much legal immigration too.

There is an extensive technical literature on the economics of immigration, to which Hanson alludes only barely. But to his credit he does manage to include the key statistic: the immigrant

presence costs every native-born California household an extra \$1,200 annually in taxes. That took some finding because this staggering estimate—it's actually \$1,174 and comes from the National Research Council's 1997 report *The New Americans*—was successfully

buried by one of the most mendacious press releases I've seen in 30 years of journalism. (In contrast, Hanson seems totally unaware of the rest of the immigration-reform bookshelf. He casually dismisses Pat Buchanan, whose arguments are completely compatible with his own, as a "reactionary"—whatever that means.)

Hanson doesn't need economists, however. He establishes through anecdote rather than analysis the crucial point: illegal immigrants (and their employers) are subsidized by the American welfare state.

Directly, Hanson never fails to note the HUD-supported housing and other federal and state programs, the *de facto* free health care via hospital emergency rooms, the immense education expenditures from grade school on up. (The University of California at Santa Barbara has 75 courses on Chicano issues, one course on "Civil War and Reconstruction," none on the Revolutionary War and World War II.) Indirectly, Hanson demonstrates that illegal immigration is very much the shadow of labor-market regulation with this terse calculation, perhaps familiar from hiring laborers in his own fields: "At \$10 an hour without state, federal and payroll taxes deducted, the worker really earns the equivalent of a gross \$13 an hour or more, and the employer saves over 30 percent in payroll contributions and expensive paperwork."

As Hanson goes on to note, of course, this necessarily means that Californians who do obey the law have to pay more taxes to cover the costs of the welfare state. And at 50, the illegal worker is physically worn out and unemployable. His American-born children are alienated high-school dropouts. More illegals arrive to do the work that they "won't do." The cycle of privatized profits and socialized costs begins again.

Typically, it's not clear that Hanson understands what he has found. In one brief somewhat contradictory passage, he repeats the common canard that California would be "paralyzed" without immigration—ignoring the potential of

mechanization, imports, and just plain raising wages.

Throughout *Mexifornia*, Hanson parades his own lack of prejudice. He incessantly says how much he likes Mexicans, despite providing many reasons why a normal man might not. He keeps stressing that his own family is intermarrying: he has a Mexican sister-in-law, Mexican nephews and nieces, and—hallelujah!—“[his] two daughters are going steady with Mexican-Americans.” (No word on his son. But no doubt he eats tacos).

Personally, I find this sort of truckling irritating, even peculiar. But it unquestionably reassures a certain type of reader. This may be the first immigration-reform book in the modern era that no reviewer has accused of Nazism—a notable breakthrough.

The problem is that Hanson’s open-mindedness appears to be a dogma. His one-word dismissal of Buchanan is not an aberration. Thus, in discussing the systematic Mexican underperformance that his own work shows is extending into the second American-born generation, he brushes aside any explanation from “racial or genetic pseudoscience.” Nine years after the *The Bell Curve* showed that Mexican immigrants do indeed lag American whites in average IQ, this is not good enough.

And Hanson describes Operation Wetback, the deportation program with which the Eisenhower Administration ended the very similar illegal-immigration crisis of the 1950s, as “infamous.” In post-publication interviews, he has endorsed yet another illegal-alien amnesty, apparently not realizing their disastrous history.

Plato concluded artists don’t understand their own work because they are inspired directly by the gods. At least the divinity that inspired the classicist Hanson’s creative frenzy was an American patriot. ■

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[*The Boys’ Crusade: The American Infantry in Northwestern Europe, 1944-1945*, Paul Fussell, *The Modern Library*, 184 pages]

The Good War

By Clark Stooksbury

THE 20TH CENTURY witnessed the rise of total war. The technological progress that made life better in so many ways also facilitated mass killing, and although governments came up with new ways to kill from a distance, the infantryman with small arms still had to close with and destroy the enemy. Few have done more to illuminate the perspective of the soldier on the frontlines than Paul Fussell. Both in his own books, such as *Wartime*, and in his promotion of others, such as the late Eugene B. Sledge’s *With the Old Breed*, Fussell aims to demythologize war. The true nature of World War II, in which Fussell served, has been obscured in the last several years, in part by Tom Brokaw’s syrupy paeans to the Greatest Generation. Fussell begins clearing away the fog in the preface of *The Boys’ Crusade* by addressing the rise of “military romanticism” and debunking the notion that war “contains desirable elements—pride, companionship, and the consciousness of virtue enforced by deadly weapons.”

Paul Fussell’s war contains a great deal of fear, shame, death, and hatred that was not always directed at the Germans. *The Boys’ Crusade* addresses themes familiar to readers of Fussell’s other works but narrowed to fit the particular circumstances of American soldiers who invaded France in 1944 and pressed towards Germany.

The book’s title comes from an Order of the Day issued by General Eisenhower to be read to troops just before the Normandy invasion. It told them that they were “about to embark on a Great Crusade.” Fussell assures the reader that soldiers responded to this state-

ment with the “scorn and skepticism” with which they greeted all official pronouncements.

Before embarking on their crusade, the boys that Paul Fussell chronicles landed in England. In that country, already ravaged by war, surely the locals appreciated the Americans who were coming to help rescue them? Not exactly. Hostility between American and English soldiers is only one area of conflict that Fussell describes. English soldiers resented their American counterparts’ superior uniforms, pay, and the advantage that these gave in competition for English women. The English complaint was that Americans were, “overpaid, oversexed and over here.” The American interpretation was that the Brits were “underpaid, undersexed and under Eisenhower.” In addition to conflict between the English and Americans, enlisted men disliked their officers, American officers disliked their English counterparts, and soldiers on the front-line disliked everybody to their rear.

Most of *The Boys’ Crusade* is dedicated to the actual war on the Continent, described in discreet episodes. Fussell focuses in on details that others might overlook. Take, for example, the plight of euphemistically named “replacements.” He isn’t here referring to parts for Jeeps or tanks—he is talking about boys, as he insists on calling the soldiers in the infantry. It is a fact of life that if you send a group of young men charging into the fire coming from enemy tanks, artillery, and rifles, many are not going to be able to continue due to death, dismemberment, desertion, or derangement. The first blow to the morale of the brighter draftees offloading at a Replacement Training Center came with the realization of the significance of the first word in the title. “The bright boy then must have wondered: Will a boy like me be killed or torn up or otherwise rendered unable to go on with the battle, to be replaced by me, probably to undergo the same experience in my turn?” Many of these unfortunates came from ranks such as the air corps and the Army Specialized Training Program where they thought they would

have an easy war. One problem that replacements faced came not from the Germans on the other side but from the veterans in the units that they joined. Since replacements entered as outsiders, joining otherwise cohesive groups, they were often looked down on and treated as more expendable. Fussell quotes one account from Anzio where a staff sergeant leading a platoon explained how eight replacements were lost in an action, while none of the veterans were, because they "weren't going to send [their] own guys out on point in a damnfool situation like that."

Fussell attributes the Army's difficulty in handling this issue to its failure to take into account actual human behavior—no shock to anyone to dealing with the government or the military. The

troops were casualties. Many others failed to perform up to expectations. The battle in the forest was so horrific that it "produced a whole parade of 'unmanly' behaviors: unordered flight and even rout; flagrant disobedience; bursting into tears; faking illnesses; and self-inflicted wounds." The 28th infantry division had a particular problem performing. One of its members was Private Eddie Slovik, who had the dubious distinction of being the only American soldier shot for desertion since the Civil War. After the war, the 28th produced a booklet called *28th Roll On: The Story Of The 28th Infantry Division* that Fussell describes as a masterpiece—of omission, evasion, and cheerful euphemism, and necessarily so: How do you inform a proud mother about the body

treatment of dead bodies. One of the insanities of war that Fussell notes is the way that medical personnel treat the enemy, upon being wounded: as patients to be saved instead of soldiers to be killed. He also briefly illuminates the role of Graves Registration Details who had the grim task of collecting and disposing of dead bodies on all sides. Because these men would not have known the dead that they were collecting, it was emotionally less difficult than if the front-line troops had been forced to do it themselves, but Fussell advises that consuming alcohol was "a practical necessity for this kind of work." In similar fashion to medical personnel, the members of the Graves Registration Detail buried German soldiers and collected their dog tags. The only difference in their treatment was that American dead got individual graves, while dead Germans were buried in pits.

Towards the end of *The Boys' Crusade*, Fussell describes the reaction of troops discovering Nazi slave-labor camps. They were of course, appalled, and discovery of this made the "crusade" metaphor that Eisenhower used before the Normandy invasion more plausible. It hardened American soldiers' attitudes toward the Germans, who, unlike the Japanese, had not attacked the United States. He describes instances where American troops allowed inmates at newly liberated camps to take revenge on their guards.

Paul Fussell doesn't go into graphic detail describing what happens to a rifle company engaged in close combat—for that see the final chapter of *Wartime* or *With The Old Breed*—but he does inform the reader, "[E]ven when writers describe gruesome experiences and sights, the most appalling details have probably been excised or softened. Things were worse than they were allowed to seem, and many were literally unspeakable." ■

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DESERTERS WERE ESSENTIALLY **TRADING THEIR HONOR** FOR THEIR LIVES.

Army failed for most of the war to understand the role of shame in the face of one's comrades in motivating men in small groups to continue fighting. "It was more powerful than patriotism or ideology or hatred of the enemy in extracting uncowardly behavior from soldiers ... replacements entered the line as individuals, knowing no one. Missing was their critical audience of buddies whose disapproval they feared more than anything."

Unfortunately, at times uncowardly behavior yielded to the cowardly. Fussell notes the Army jargon of soldiers who "retired" from the battlefield, as opposed the more appropriate terms, "fled," "ran away," or "hauled ass." He notes this as a particular problem with replacements, but they were not alone in this.

The battle in the Hürtgen Forest—along the border of Germany and Belgium—was the sight of many soldiers "retiring" from the battlefield. According to Fussell, many of the "boys," looking back at the distance of 60 years would remember this as their worst time, even compared to D-day itself. During this month-long battle, 33,000 of 120,000

of a high-school boy blown apart and left in snow and ice in the midst of untended-to mines and booby traps? At the beginning of this little booklet, the soldier owner, presumed to be proud and cheerful, is invited to fill in blanks about his battle actions, making him complicit in lies and optimism too.

One method of escaping the front line—the self-inflicted wound—neatly illustrates the unfathomability of total war to those of us who have not experienced it. Deserters were essentially trading their honor for their lives. Others preferred to maintain the semblance of honorable behavior by blowing a finger or toe off. This sort of behavior is unimaginably irrational under normal circumstances. Under the manifestly irrational circumstances of combat, such behavior makes sense. Just as people may incur small hardships to avoid more serious ones, such as getting a flu shot so as to avoid the full-fledged diseases, many men chose to inoculate themselves against being blown to pieces by sacrificing a finger or a toe.

Two companions to combat are the care of the wounded soldiers and the

MUSIC

Eve of Destruction

By Anthony Gancarski

THOSE WITH MORE on their minds than the vicissitudes of the pop-music marketplace might be forgiven for thinking that “protest music” died some time between “Peace With Honor” and the Rockefeller Vice Presidency. The prevailing mainstream view for the last couple of decades has been that the music of the Vietnam era (specifically, white Top 40 music) was singularly powerful and an impossible act for subsequent generations of musicians to follow.

Despite the ubiquity of that claim, it doesn’t stand up to close examination. Much of the “popular” protest music—to name two songs, the Temptations’ “Ball of Confusion” and Marvin Gaye’s “What’s Going On?”—came well after the 1968 Tet Offensive. Tet signaled for many cultural elites that, as Walter Cronkite put it famously, “the only rational way out ... will be to negotiate, not as victors, but as honorable people.”

If the Vietnam War was considered unwinnable as early as 1968, then what risk was there for a musician protesting against it? More importantly, what legitimate protest has there ever been in soundtracking the desires of the media elites? Those questions are barely asked in the mainstream media—let alone answered—and such omissions from the public record speak for themselves. And so it could be argued that, during the Vietnam era, as well as before it and certainly in the present tense, the most vibrant, meaningful, and true protest music hailed from the musical underground.

The Last Poets, formed in 1968 by three Afrocentric poets and a drummer, embodied the underground spirit in a

way more commercially viable acts either wouldn’t or couldn’t. Umar bin Hassan, a charter member of the Poets, explained their name rather allegorically, saying, “[W]hen the moment hatches in time’s womb there will be no art talk. The only poem you will hear will be the spear-point pivoted in the punctured marrow of the villain. ... [W]e are the last poets of the world.”

Umar and his band of bards couldn’t be marketed to the mainstream like some Motown vocal quartet, however. Not when they challenged the evisceration of black culture and pride as bluntly as they did on “When The Revolution Comes,” a standout track from their 1970 LP (sample lyrics: “When the revolution comes/some of us will catch it on TV/with chicken hanging from our mouths”). These lyrics, caustic in their dismissal of black passivity, more closely adhere to the doctrine of personal responsibility promulgated by Friedrich Hayek, Frank Chodorov, and Russell Kirk than much of the contemporaneous white music of rebellion, which often conflated political consciousness with the embrace of fuzzy-headed hedonism.

But not all white protest music of the 1960s could be dismissed as a Learyesque call to “tune in, turn on, and drop out.” Bob Dylan’s lacerating “Masters of War” laid waste to the war planners who “lie and deceive ... like Judas of old.” Phil Ochs’s searing “Ballad of the Cuban Invasion,” likewise took the Kennedy administration to task for

namely, that the government leads America into unwinnable conflicts, all the while making arrangements that run counter to the interests of the common people. These are points with which many populist conservatives would agree.

Even before the Vietnam Era, songs of confrontation made more than one artist’s legacy greater than it would have been if protest themes had been avoided. “Strange Fruit,” Billie Holiday’s signature vocal performance, described the corpses of southern lynching as “a strange and bitter crop” of “the gallant South.” And in 1959, on the cusp of the decade of Camelot and quagmire, free-jazz icon Charles Mingus cut a side, “Fables of Faubus,” that took the “sick and ridiculous” Arkansas governor to the woodshed for rejecting integration in his state’s public schools. A year after “Faubus,” drummer and composer Max Roach (along with singer Abbey Lincoln, a woman whose pipes Roach liked so much he married her), released the seminal *We Insist: Freedom Now Suite* on Candid records. Roach, arguably Jazz’s greatest ever percussionist, was heavily influenced in this period by Malcolm X and other figures in the Civil Rights movement who argued that black empowerment could only come with concerted, spiritually rooted effort.

Given that effective, interesting protest music builds an artist’s reputation like little else, why isn’t there more of it? One reason is that radio, locked in an endless cycle of consolidation and enforced

IF THE **VIETNAM WAR** WAS CONSIDERED UNWINNABLE AS EARLY AS 1968, THEN WHAT WAS THE RISK IN **PROTESTING AGAINST IT?**

“spending my country’s gold” on the disastrous Bay of Pigs incident. And Buffy Sainte-Marie’s “Universal Soldier” was singular in its condemnation of the soldier who “knows he shouldn’t kill/but knows he always will.” All these songs point, like “When the Revolution Comes,” to a sobering conclusion,

homogeneity, loathes featuring potentially offensive songs in heavy rotation. Especially in the last couple years, radio music that challenges the *status quo* has become much harder to find; it’s easier these days to find an ad for a porn shop on the radio than it is to hear a song denouncing war.

The most visible recent example of pop music exploiting love of country for commercial reasons is "Have You Forgotten?" by Darryl Worley. This charmlessly twanging tune finds the vocalist picking up where Lee Greenwood left off years before with "Proud to Be An American." Worley's hit single chides non-enthusiasts of the omnibus War on Terror for "saying we don't need this war," implying that their contention that "we don't realize this mess we're getting in" is both foolish and wrong-headed; in Worley's view, those pacifists fail to realize that only uncompromising and total war can defeat the menace of bin Laden.

JUST AS A SLAVE **CANNOT SERVE TWO MASTERS**, THE CLEAR CHANNELS OF THE WORLD CANNOT SIMULTANEOUSLY **CELEBRATE AMERICA'S FOREIGN WARS** WHILE PLAYING **MUSIC THAT CONTRADICTS THAT MESSAGE**.

Meanwhile, the industry behaves as if paeans to the military-industrial complex are just the thing to promote until patriotism is again passé (and not a moment longer).

With an industry-wide commitment to songs like "Have You Forgotten" on the record, it's understandable that alternative perspectives are absent from Casey Kasem's Top 40 Countdown. Just as a slave cannot serve two masters, the Clear Channels of the world cannot simultaneously celebrate America's foreign wars while playing music that contradicts that message. Better to keep the music irrelevant and the advertisers happy than to risk compromising revenue streams so that some yahoo with a guitar can criticize America. Whatever one might think of big radio's pusillanimity, at least there's consistency to it.

Yet this sort of "consistency" has been poison to the music industry. Hip hop, the only commercially viable genre left, resonates with the under-30 set of all races precisely because it is the only form of popular music speaking truth with any reliability. Even punk music—not too long ago, a caustic yet effective

tool for advocating social change—has been effectively gelded and commodified. A highly popular "punk" song now is an amped-up cover of Don Henley's soporific "Boys of Summer," a tune that can be described many ways, though it hardly lives up to the uncompromising lyrical standards of Bad Religion, Fugazi, and other bands whose first priority was imparting messages of individual sovereignty to the hordes teeming in the mosh pits.

With new-school punk being used as a forum for covers of hits from decades ago, it's no wonder that people, increasingly conscious that something is

irreparably amiss in America, have turned their radios off and tuned in to "conscious" rap music. Lucky for them, there is plenty of quality hip hop underneath the commercial radar that speaks to issues more important than casual sex and maudlin breakups.

One of the more interesting, yet underexposed, MCs in the business today is Boston's MC Lif. The Massachusetts rapper rhymes, as he claims in his own press materials, to weave together "the Florida election scandal, the administrations of Bushes I & II, the First Amendment, the fragmentation of pop culture, the September 11 attacks, racial profiling, the economic recession, anthrax, bin Laden, and the less foresighted aspects of recent US foreign policy into a scabrous web of deceit."

I don't suppose Lif is booked to play the 2004 Republican Convention. After all, it's hard to imagine a room full of delegates bobbing their heads to lyrics like "They're killing several birds with one stone/While you're at home with anti-terrorism up in your dome/You can wave that flag if you dare/But they killed us 'cause we been killing them for years."

Rappers like Lif are the polar opposite of Jay-Z, P. Diddy, and other ambassadors of bling bling hip hop. Underground MCs rhyme to restore meaning to American popular music, this in spite of the music industry's apparent belief that one Mariah Carey or Michael Jackson is worth roughly a hundred truth-telling underground rappers. I am solidly optimistic that their efforts will bear fruit; it's impossible to listen to the music of Atlanta's Outkast or Kentucky's Nappy Roots (both rap acts who have flourished commercially with white audiences) and not realize that their latest releases are more profound, experimental, and prophetic than their early records. In large part, these acts improved in response to underground hip hop acts raising the bar of content and musical experimentation, in no small part because they realize that they have nothing to lose and everything to gain by "keeping it real."

In the most optimistic assessment, the increased relevance of underground hip hop might rub off on the product put forth by white rock artists. New York's Ani DiFranco's sinewy, rhythmic "Self-evident" memorably laid into every "jackass newscaster who was struck dumb and stumbling over 'oh my god' and 'this is unbelievable' and on and on" in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Sonic Youth front man and alternative rock legend Thurston Moore is behind protest-records.com, an MP3-centric label devoted to songs protesting against the Iraq action and the War on Terror. Feminist indie-rockers Sleater-Kinney, on their latest (and possibly strongest) album *Combat Rock*, break the unspoken taboo against women singing about U.S. foreign policy. These phenomena all augur well for the present and future of protest music. Now all that's left is for Jennifer Lopez, Madonna, or Britney Spears to record a cover of the Geto Boys' house party classic, "Ain't Going to War for No (Trash talking) President." ■

Anthony Gancarski has written about music for numerous national publications, including URB and Spin.

Nobility in Our Time



An Austrian nobleman and an American aristocrat died on the same day recently, and I feel this is not the end of a chapter but the end of a book. My

father-in-law, his Serene Highness Prince Peter Schoenburg-Hartenstein was 88. He was a naturalized American citizen, having left Austria in 1937, just before the *Anschluss*. He was born in the Rome embassy of the Austro-Hungarian empire, where his father was ambassador to the Holy See. His mother, Princess Sophia Oettingen-Wallerstein, traced her noble lineage to before Charlemagne, as did the Schoenburgs. In the Congress of Vienna, the Schoenburgs were recognized as ranking equally with the ruling families of Europe, with corresponding privileges. In a memoir published only for the family, Peter Schoenburg wrote of how the world he knew as a child, a world of footmen in silk breeches, of bowing and scraping and forelock tugging, came to a sudden end with the collapse of the Austrian Empire in 1918. Old Prince Schoenburg, who refused to serve anyone but the emperor, moved to his lands in Bohemia, to a 13th-century fortress called Cervená Lhota or Red House. The *New York Times* has described the castle as the most beautiful and romantic in Europe.

Young Peter served as a cavalry officer between the wars and enjoyed himself in the cosmopolitan Viennese atmosphere of operettas, waltzes, and the *gemutlich* things of life. There was nothing quite like interwar Vienna. There was Italian elegance, Spanish obsession with death, alpine naïveté, and the intellectual refinement of emancipated Jews. And a certain melancholy. It was Vienna's golden autumn. During World War II, Peter's two older brothers were sent to the Russian front, where

eight of their cousins perished, his siblings ending up prisoners of the Soviets after Stalingrad. (I find this extremely ironic. The Schoenburgs, like so many of their ilk, loathed the Nazis, yet served and died. The neocons love the regime, but do not serve, and send others to die.) One of Peter's sisters, Loremarie, went to the pope to ask permission to assassinate Hitler. The pontiff refused formally to sanction it, but he made a point of not disapproving of it. The Schoenburgs had smelled out the Nazis long before anyone else. As H.L. Mencken wrote, every decent man is ashamed of the government he lives under. Peter Schoenburg was among the first to be ashamed, as was the rest of his family, many of them involved with the July 20th plot against Hitler.

In far away South America, Peter became active in the Amazon frontier as an explorer. He eventually moved to America when he married the patrician Lee Russell Jones, his widow. After the war, while European socialists robbed the aristocracy of their stately homes, lands, and castles, Peter quietly raised his American family of three children and worked to help the Harlem unemployed. Although relentlessly pursued by ambitious hostesses, he shunned the limelight, secure in his own identity, therefore psychologically free to treat everyone he came across as his equal. This is an American trait but also the sign of true nobility. Snobbery, after all, is nothing but bad manners trying to pass itself off as good taste. Though government and society nowadays has fallen into the hands of unspeakable philistines, vulgarians, and grotesque

publicity hounds, Peter remained calm and serene as we discussed politics non-stop. I never once heard him utter an uncivil word. His son Peter went to Yale and has dedicated his life to defending the poor and defenseless in New Mexico. This is what *noblesse oblige* is all about.

Last week we buried his ashes in his upstate New York land. There was no hymn singing, no religious spectacle, just many tears from his six grandchildren. There was a simple procession of mourners, led by my wife, her brother and sister, their children, and his widow. As we Greeks say, may the earth that covers him be soft.

C.Z. Guest was as American as they come, as aristocratic as one can be and as original as is possible. She was on the cover of *Time* in 1962 because of her rare beauty and style, described as a Grace-Kelly-type by the vulgar press. C.Z. was no Grace. There was nothing glitzy about her. Hers was an unique beauty, which lasted until her 82nd year. She was called stylish, and she was. Style, however, cannot be decoded, nor can it be bestowed. True style is not calculated but intimately connected with sincerity. I was always madly in love with her, and the day she died we spoke over the telephone and joked about so-called society ladies who lunch. C.Z. was a syndicated gardening columnist, an expert horsewoman, a good tennis player, and a tireless worker for charitable causes. Like all true aristos, she was as much at ease speaking to dukes as to dustmen. She was on the best-dressed list since her early 20s, yet was known to wear 40-year-old dresses and manage to look better than *nouveaux riches* women wearing the latest creations. Like Peter, she was blessed with *arete*, the Greek word for goodness, which carries with it strong overtones of moral and political wisdom. May she, too, rest in peace. ■

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